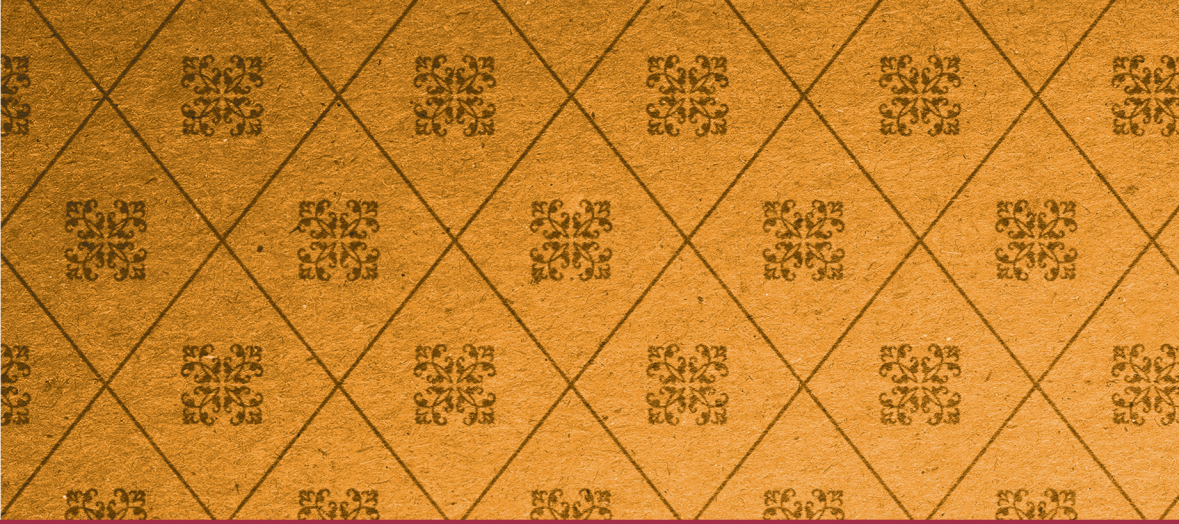
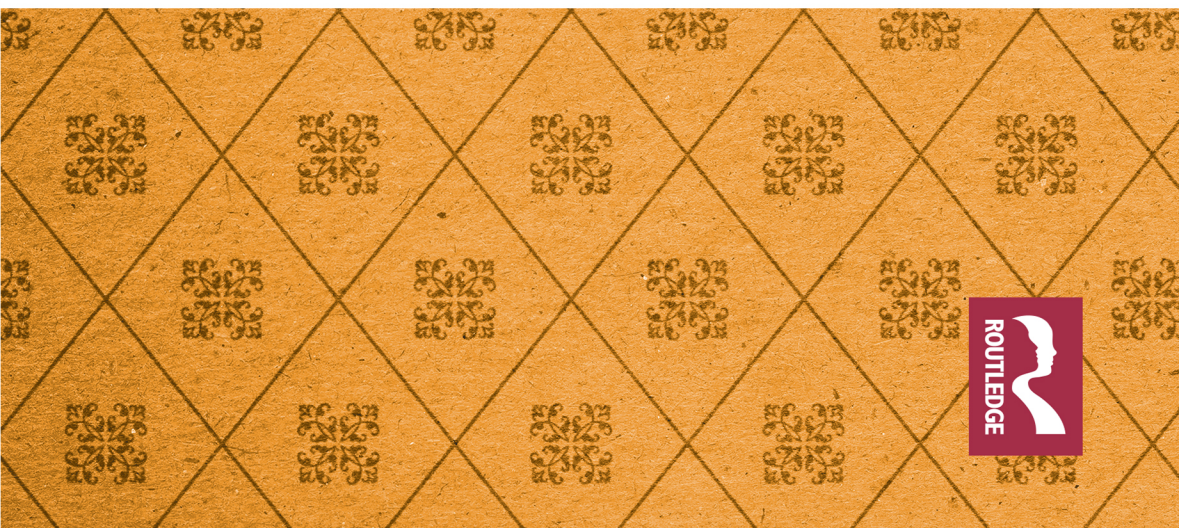


British School at Athens – Modern Greek and Byzantine Studies

THE MACEDONIAN FRONT, 1915–1918

POLITICS, SOCIETY AND CULTURE IN TIME OF WAR

Edited by
Basil C. Gounaris, Michael Llewellyn-Smith
and Ioannis D. Stefanidis



ROUTLEDGE

The Macedonian Front, 1915–1918

The 'Macedonian question' has been much studied in recent years as has the political history of the period from the Balkan Wars in 1912–13 to the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923. But for a variety of reasons, connected with the political division of Greece and the involvement of outside powers, the events at and behind the Macedonian front have been sidelined. The recent commemorations of the centenary of the end of the World War I in the UK illustrate how by comparison with the enormous and moving emphasis on the western front, Macedonia has been not wholly but largely ignored. This volume illuminates this comparatively neglected period of Greek history and examines the strategic and military aspects of the war in Macedonia and the political, social, economic and cultural context of the war.

Basil C. Gounaris is Professor of Modern History in the Department of History and Archaeology, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, and author of many books and articles, particularly on the history of Macedonia and history of the Balkans.

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Politics, Society and Culture in Time of War

Edited by
Basil C. Gounaris,
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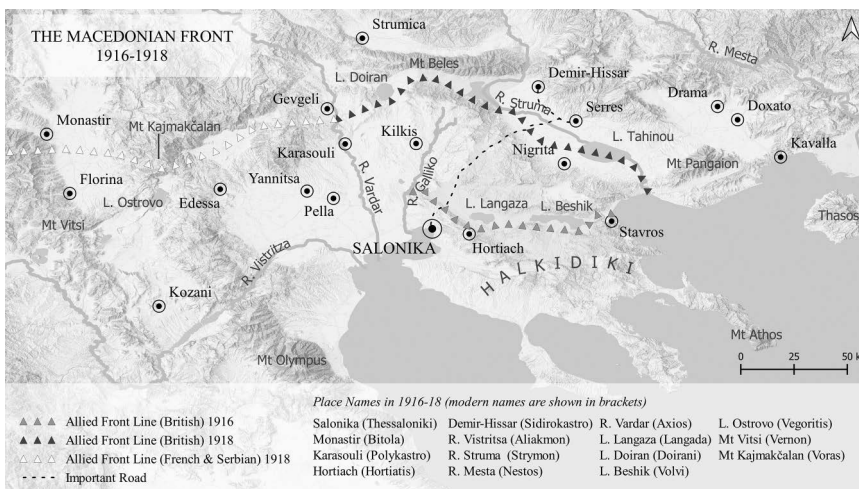

Figure 0.1 Map of the Macedonian Front 1916–1918

Editors' Introduction

Basil C. Gounaris, Michael Llewellyn-Smith and Ioannis D. Stefanidis

Introduction

The military campaign in Macedonia which lasted from October 1915 to November 1918 fits awkwardly into the usual frameworks within which we look at World War I, whether strategic, military, literary or social. It is not easy to state convincingly the reasons for which it was fought, since these differed with the various parties involved. Ostensibly it was engaged in by Britain and France in order to relieve Serbia, which to the north west of Greek Macedonia was under deadly attack by Austria. Such relief had to come via Greece and was jeopardised by the opposition of Constantine, King of Greece, to the Franco-British project. In any case, the relief came too late to save the Serbs, whose army was forced to retreat through Albania and take refuge in Corfu. French and British troops were thus left in and around Salonika (Thessaloniki) with no clear aim except to survive and repel any attack on them, which they did by digging in and fortifying their positions through a scheme of fortifications known as the 'Birdcage'. Over time the combatant armies developed different aims for themselves. The French, in the lead on the Entente side, nourished hopes of breaking the stalemate with a campaign through the inhospitable mountains of northern Macedonia which might have led them on towards Belgrade and central Europe. The British were more concerned with survival until the campaign could be wound up. The Greeks were divided, the King's supporters concerned not with fighting but with putting obstacles in the way of the Entente armies, the followers of prime minister Eleftherios Venizelos with maintaining a working relationship with the Entente until a fighting army could be developed. Of all the combatants the Bulgarians, enemies of the Entente and of Greece, had the most straightforward aim: to hold on to the Macedonian territory occupied and recover territory lost in the Second Balkan War. The occupation of Eastern Macedonia in 1916 was a step in this direction. But the Germans, to whom they were obliged for munitions and support, would not allow them to invade the Salonika area. Meanwhile, while the armies in Macedonia suffered the ravages of malaria, their political role became evident as arbiters of the struggle between the King and his general staff and

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the followers of Venizelos. The former favoured neutrality in the war. The latter wanted alignment and alliance with the Entente. Their immediate aim was simply to be on the winning side. In the longer term, Venizelos hoped for greater things.

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The origins of this book lie in a conference held at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki in May 2018, at which some 39 speakers, from Bulgaria, Canada, France, Germany, Greece, Serbia, Turkey, the UK and the USA explored the political, strategic, social, economic and cultural aspects of World War I in Macedonia. This was the second international conference about World War I held at the Aristotle University (AUTH), the first was held in October 2017 and aimed to highlight the importance of the Salonika Front (Mourelos et al., 2018). The chair of the organising committee was Professor Ioannis Mourelos.

There was a particular reason for holding this conference. This was the widespread perception of Macedonia as a 'forgotten front' of the war. We wanted to explore the reasons for this perception, and to test its validity. Why was the Macedonia Front neglected as compared with the Western Front? It was reasonable to assume that in the UK and France the Western Front would dominate public perceptions, because of proximity, the scale of the human losses, and its centrality to the outcome of the war. One effect of this dominance was to push Macedonia into the margins. But apparently in Greece too, the war in Macedonia did not hold a place in the country's imagination which one might have expected.

An opinion survey carried out in early 2018 by the Public Opinion and Market Research Unit of the University of Macedonia, focussing on areas closely associated with the war, provided helpful pointers to the reasons for this, and we return to this survey in more detail below.[1]

Background to the campaign

Macedonia became the locus of a military campaign because of a combination of circumstances whereby the western allies of the Entente,[2] mainly France and Britain, focussed on Greece. As a result, Greece had to make a political choice between war and neutrality. From the start of the war the belligerent powers – Britain, France, Russia and later Italy for the Entente; Germany and Austria-Hungary for the Central Powers – looked to bring the peripheral states of south-east Europe into the war, each on their own side, or at least secure their neutrality. Bulgaria, Ottoman Turkey, Greece and Romania were the main targets. Also from the start, the Greek prime minister Venizelos looked for opportunities to bring Greece into the war on the side of the Entente, while King Constantine, the Greek General Staff and most anti-Venizelist politicians favoured neutrality. Venizelos' early hopes

of exploiting the Dardanelles campaign (Gallipoli) to achieve his ends were frustrated, but the widely anticipated Austrian attack on Serbia, in early autumn 1915, enabled him to insert Greece into Entente plans. The failure of the British-French Gallipoli expedition, in which colonial troops played a large part, enabled the transfer of allied troops to Macedonia. French enthusiasm for a campaign in south-eastern Europe overcame British hesitations. French and British troops landed at Salonika in October 1915, at Venizelos' invitation, and from that point, Macedonia became a theatre of operations in World War I. They quickly set about constructing the extensive defensive fortifications around Salonika known as the Birdcage[3] as a defence against expected Bulgarian attack. In the course of 1916, the balance and relationships of the opposing forces became clear: on one side (the Entente), British, French, Serbs, gradually swelling numbers of Venizelist Greeks, later Italians and Russians; on the other (the Central Powers), primarily Bulgaria, Germany, Austria-Hungary. In October 1916, having given up hope of persuading the King to bring Greece into the war, Venizelos himself arrived in Salonika and established a Provisional Government, confirming the division of Greece into Royalist Greece with its capital Athens, and Venizelist Greece consisting of Greek Macedonia, Greek (southern) Epirus, the Aegean islands and Crete.

The context in Macedonia

War and disaster were not a novelty to the peoples of Macedonia. In the first decade of the century, bloody irregular warfare had dragged on for some ten years between pro-Greek, pro-Bulgarian and pro-Romanian bands, before the Balkan Wars of 1912–13 resulted in the incorporation of Thessaloniki and its hinterland into the Greek state. This was a large step forward in the realisation of the Great Idea (*Megali Idea*) of incorporating the 'unredeemed' Greeks into the kingdom. Since then things had not improved. Turbulence, ethnic rivalries, migration posed difficult challenges for the new Greek administration. Local Greeks rushed to 'settle accounts' with Muslim beys and those pro-Bulgarian adherents of the Exarchist Church[4] who had not yet fled. Their first priority was to extract from their foes as much land as possible, in defiance of the official policy of the new authorities. The perpetrators took advantage of the shortcomings of the Greek state and exploited their services to the Greek nation in the previous decade in order to replace traditional leaders in their communities, now suspected of dubious loyalties. This replacement quickly alienated Slav-speakers, especially in pro-Bulgarian villages, from the Greek state.

When the Bulgarian army occupied the district of Florina for a few weeks in August 1916, former Exarchists openly displayed their pro-Bulgarian feeling. Even after Bulgarian forces were swept away by the Serbs, pro-Bulgarian propaganda continued, supported by Bulgarian prisoners of war, who were in regular contact with the locals. Backed by the French,

the Serb allies worked assiduously to swing Macedonians' loyalty to their favour. The Greek reaction was as harsh as one might expect. There were arbitrary arrests and the Greek authorities even considered deporting the entire pro-Bulgarian population.

The Italians were also tempted by the prospects of propaganda within their sector, in Epirus and southwestern Macedonia. They tried to win over pro-Romanian Vlach-speakers[5] by promising them an autonomous region in the Pindus mountain range. They also backed Albanian propaganda among Christian Albanian speakers. Since Romania was an ally, the French also favoured the pro-Romanian Vlachs. The Vlachs' fair knowledge of French facilitated their cooperation with the French Army, despite Greek reservations. On one occasion pro-Romanian Greek Vlachs volunteered to join the British rather than the Greek Army. It is an episode that highlights the complexity of ethnic rivalries in which the Macedonian campaign took place, for Macedonia was an area in which, as visitors from abroad noted of Salonika, one would see Greek Christians, Muslims, Bulgarian Christians, Serbian Christians, Jews (primarily in Salonika) and Vlachs, besides various contingents of troops from outside Greece.

Surprisingly, Greek conscription was successful in the Muslim villages of southwestern Macedonia. This rapprochement was the work of Ioannis Eliakis, representing the Liberal Party and later Governor-General of Western Macedonia until 1920. He had promised to protect the Muslims' human and community rights and in return the Muslims enthusiastically enlisted in the Greek army. However, muftis who were not trusted were replaced and all Muslims suspected of anti-Greek activity were deported or displaced. Measures taken against anti-Venizelist Greek speakers were much harsher. Halkidiki, a Greek-speaking prefecture which resisted conscription, was raided in September 1916 by a company under Captain Georgios Kondylis. A number of civilians were publicly executed, the houses of the runaways were sacked, their siblings maltreated, and several youths were forcibly drafted. The prefecture was deprived of food supplies and the sacking of towns and villages escalated throughout the region.

Things were made worse by the dire financial straits of Venizelos' Provisional Government. After the region had been cut off from the south, the flow not only of migrants' remittances but also of public funds had been stemmed. Without an efficiently functioning state apparatus, not even the re-allocation of tax revenue was possible. Farm tenants were desperate, because the *chiftliks*[6] had been sublet to individuals with scant respect for the tenants' age-old rights, and the latter were obliged to offer their services unpaid. Peasants were also recruited as an, often unpaid, workforce for military infrastructure projects. In addition to the burdens of conscription, farmers' pack animals were requisitioned. Any promise of land reform would alienate the land-lords, Christian, Muslim and Jewish. Moreover, land reform could not proceed without taking into account the prospects of the thousands of refugees, newly arrived from the Ottoman Empire, whose

needs were pressing. Things were much worse in Bulgarian occupied Eastern Macedonia, where the victims of famine were estimated at some ten thousand, looting and pillaging were routine, and men of more than 16 years of age were deported as hostages to Bulgaria for hard labour (see **Evanthis Hatzivassiliou's** chapter in this volume). Desperate refugees crossed the Struma river in search of food and shelter in the Greek sector. Many ended up in overcrowded Salonika.

There are other and no less important aspects of state failure in Macedonia. Education, crucial for building up national loyalty, suffered most of all state institutions. Public medical care ceased and no agricultural experts were available. The clergy was unable to sustain social solidarity. The bishops, mostly concerned with safeguarding their position and income, could not or did not want to inspire loyalty to the new Venizelist regime (see **Theodosis Tsironis**' chapter in this volume). Village priests and abbots were poorly equipped as shepherds of humans in distress. There was a long tradition of simony[7] and, in some cases, strong bonds with the Exarchist Church.

Social cohesion in urban centres was also fractured. The cleavage between the local notables, who acted as wholesale traders, and the social classes represented by the guilds, grew deeper as the war pushed up the prices of essential goods. There were serious food shortages owing to the commandeering of rolling stock for military purposes or for the use of the few Venizelist traders from Salonika. Despite its role as the hub of Allied activity, Salonika proved no exception to the widespread misery. Still struggling to adjust to the new Greek regime after 1912, its commercial community was cut off from Europe and the Balkans, before it suffered the devastating effects of the great fire of August 1917, which made many thousands homeless and destroyed much of the Jewish quarter of the city.[8] Extensive contraband, forced circulation of the French franc, shortage of credit and the unresolved question of import duties impeded recovery. Demonstrations demanding lower food prices were frequent and it is doubtful whether order could have been maintained without martial law, which had been introduced by the French commander-in-chief of the Army of the Orient, Maurice Sarrail.

The cleavages – ethnic, social, religious and local – prevalent in Greek Macedonia could not have been bridged even in peacetime, let alone during the war. To make things worse, the allies tried to exploit such cleavages for their own purposes, well beyond the needs of the campaign. The cost of such malaise was paid by the Venizelos governments. Unable to sustain good administration, the Liberals' last resort was clientelism. But this did not work in their favour. Even when indigenous co-operation with the Allies improved, this did not imply true political support for Venizelos. His grip on Macedonia remained limited and fragile.

All these problems, arising from the weakness of Greek administration in an ethnically mixed region, full of refugees, and subject to the revanchist ambitions of Bulgaria, were landed on the shoulders of Venizelos, when,

after the King's policy of neutrality accommodated the surrender of Eastern Macedonia to the Bulgarians, he moved via Crete and the Aegean Islands to Salonika in September/October 1916. His ambitions for Greece and disgust with the King's behaviour drove him to this step. In establishing his provisional government he still left room for the King to change his mind. The circumstances facing him could hardly have been more difficult. They were exacerbated not only by the unsurprisingly bitter hostility of the royal government in Athens but also by the reserved attitude of the Entente governments, at least until they decided to proceed with King Constantine's expulsion, in June 1917. Despite all the difficulties, Venizelos' provisional government had important achievements to its credit, especially in land reform and education, besides the mobilisation of a substantial and, ultimately, effective army.

The scope of the book

The chapters of this book deal with a wide spectrum of issues arising from the Macedonian campaign. The essential background is the military confrontation of Entente and Greek forces with the forces of the Central Powers, primarily Bulgarian. Venizelos' revolt against the King was precipitated by the Bulgarian occupation of Eastern Macedonia in 1916. **Ian F.W. Beckett** in his overview of the campaign gives the necessary account of military developments. It took time for the Venizelist army to be constituted as an effective force, but once this was achieved it was able to play a vigorous and successful part in the late phases of the campaign, for example at Skra di Legen in late May 1918. The domestic obstacles against which Venizelos and his commanders had to struggle are illustrated in **George Th. Mavrogordatos**' chapter on mutinies and desertions in the army, encouraged by the anti-Venizelist faction relying on the prestige of the Crown.

The Army of the Orient was under French command, exercised in the early stages by General Sarrail. The armies of the two main allies, France and Britain, had differing traditions, differing long-term strategies for southeast Europe and the Near East, and largely different mindsets. **John Horne**'s account of the colonial approach of the French army sets it in a long historical tradition going back to the time of Napoleon. France dominated the Entente's military strategy and political approach to Macedonia, overcoming British hesitations and finally expelling King Constantine, facilitating the reunification of the country and the restoration of Venizelos to Athens as prime minister in June 1917. **Kostas Kostis** in his chapter on the financial mobilisation of Greece outlines how Greece entered the war in a relatively strong financial state but gradually the costs and burdens of warfare took their toll so that, by 1919, the country was ill-prepared for the expedition to western Asia Minor. **Evanthis Hatzivassiliou**'s account of the Bulgarian occupation of Eastern Macedonia and its grievous effects in deaths, imprisonment and immiseration of the Greek population shows the

terrible cost of war in a region of disputed territorial claims. One should imagine similar harshness on a lesser scale in other Balkan areas.

The Macedonian campaign comprised long periods of inactivity, training, leisure activities (sports, natural history, journalism), one aspect of which **Alan Wakefield** presents in his chapter on British war photography in Macedonia, which shows how official and unofficial photographers left valuable records of developments outside the purely military campaign, for example the great fire of 1917 in Salonika. Not exactly a leisure activity, but certainly an activity for which trench warfare gave opportunities, was archaeology behind the front which, along with Greek efforts to implement the Great Idea, is the subject of **Richard Clogg**'s chapter. He refers to the 'weaponisation of antiquities', and clearly favours the Realpolitik answer to the question he poses about the acquisition by the British Museum and the Louvre of archaeological finds turned up in the campaign, of which the export should have been prohibited under Greek law.

Other contributions directly related to the campaign include **Anthony Hirst**'s account of the diary and memoire of the poet, translator and doctor Theodore Stephanides' experiences in training and at the front facing the Bulgarians. **Roderick Bailey**'s chapter is on 'Baby Killers' in the Balkans, the raids by German airships and the shooting down of one such, a coup of which Entente propaganda made good use. **Marina Petraki** writes about Greek propaganda which cultivated and made use of the image of Bulgaria as a rapacious and brutal enemy. From the other side, **Nicole Immig** describes the propaganda efforts on behalf of Germany undertaken in Greece by Ernst von Falkenhausen, pilot, diplomat and courtier.

One of the scourges with which armies on both sides of the front had to struggle was disease. **Mark Harrison**'s chapter on 'a pandemic of great intensity' shows not only the debilitating effect of malaria on allied forces from distant countries but also the differing analyses of French and British medical opinion on the incidence, causes and remedies. Harrison's chapter is balanced by **Christine E. Hallett**'s account of British and empire nursing in Macedonia. The majority of the nurses of all national armies put up with hardships and disease which were often as harrowing as those endured by the soldiers. One of the editors of this book has a particular personal interest, since of the three exemplars in Hallett's chapter one was a distant cousin who served in and around Salonika as a VAD (Voluntary Aid Detachment)[9] nurse.

Other contributions are less directly related to the military campaign but much influenced by it. **Eirini Anesti**'s chapter on housing, infrastructure and social issues in Salonika during the war reflects the major impact of the arrival and settling of large-scale armies in a city and hinterland only recently acquired by Greece. Salonika itself emerges as the central focus of the campaign, the economic centre, and the place of recreation of the soldiers of several armies: Greek, French, British, Serbian and also Russian and Italian. **Jasmina Tomasevic** writes about the impact the city made on Serbian troops,

whose rural background and relatively 'innocent' approach to the war made them find the brothels of Salonika less of an attraction than did the soldiers of some other countries.

The feature of Salonika that is remarked on in many soldiers' and nurses' memoirs, and often illustrated including by Greek and allied cartoonists, is the exoticism of the mixed populations of the city, including the large Jewish community which outnumbered the Greeks, Muslims and Slavs. **Paris Papamichos Chronakis** describes and the politics of contraband trade bringing out the complexity of the connections between the identities of Mediterranean Jews and their success in wartime conditions. **Philip Carabott** gives an account of an important development in the Jewish community in his chapter on The Great War and the coming together of Zionists in Greece. The community, doomed to near extinction in World War II, fitted uneasily into the newly Hellenised and Hellenising Salonika with its strong flavour of Greek nationalism.

With the defeat and dissolution of the Bulgarian army in September 1918, the end came almost as a surprise after three years of static warfare punctuated by unsuccessful or indecisive attacks. The armistice with Bulgaria opened to the allied forces the roads north towards the Danube, and east to Constantinople. The consequences justified the long waiting game played by the Entente forces, and equally the policy of Venizelos in attaching himself and Greece to the Entente. As a participant in the allied victory, he was able to claim at the Paris peace conference Thrace, the Aegean islands, and even a part of Asia Minor as fruits of that victory. The consequences for Ludendorff in Germany were shattering, as **Hew Strachan** explains in his chapter on how World War I ended. It is tempting – almost – to take the view that despite malaria, dysentery and influenza, World War I was really won and lost in the mountains of Macedonia. But that will not do. Rather, the combination of decisive victory in Macedonia with the subsequent collapse of Germany and the armistice of 11 November on the Western Front opened up all of Europe and a large part of the Middle East to the peacemaking process, and to the turbulence and post-war political struggles that are described in **Jay Winter**'s chapter on The Second Great War, 1917–23.

The aftermath

For Greece and Venizelos, the war gains that were bought at such cost in national division and hatred, to say nothing of wartime casualties, were substantial: Western Thrace, confirmation of Greek sovereignty over the Aegean islands, even – but only temporarily – Eastern Thrace and western Asia Minor, as became evident after the landing of Greek troops in Smyrna in May 1919, mandated by the Big Three (Lloyd George, Clemenceau and President Wilson) at the Paris peace conference. But Asia Minor was a step too far. The Greek economy was under increasing strain from 1919 until the

final military disaster, followed by the destruction of much of the great city of Smyrna, in 1922. The Greek polity, incompetently led by a succession of royalist governments, could not rise to the challenge. Meanwhile, Venizelos lived out his exile in France and the Americas. In retrospect it seems almost inevitable that Greece in late 1922 was reduced to its mainland Greek and island core, buttressed by Macedonia and part of Epirus and Thrace to the north. The dream of a politically Greek Asia Minor, the Greece of two continents and five seas, was extinguished, and the Greek cultural heritage of Asia Minor had painfully to be replanted in Greece through the refugees who crossed the Aegean from their Turkish homelands in the 1920s.

For Greece's two main allies, France and Britain, the end of the war inaugurated a period of mixed power and impotence. They held the power, or its shadow, at the Paris peace conference, and in disposing of the lost provinces of the Ottoman Empire, but they were impotent to control events as a period of fragmentation and reassembly succeeded war. In Turkey, Britain came up against the limits of her power in 1922 in a humiliating confrontation with Kemalist Turkey at Chanak. The tensions between Britain and France over Turkey, the Middle East and Germany played their part in diminishing the effectiveness of the wartime allies.

Another part of the aftermath was cultural. In the field of literature, the novel of Stratis Myrivilis *Life in the Tomb*, first published in 1923 and subsequently in several editions, is still very much alive for Greek readers and has attained the status of a classic war, or anti-war, novel. **Maria Nikolopoulou** sets it, and the work of Theodoros Laskaridis, cut short by his suicide in 1921, in the context of the innovative war literature of France, Germany, Britain, Italy and other countries involved in the war. The other works of art that we feature, and illustrate, in this book are the wall paintings by Stanley Spencer at the Sandham Memorial Chapel at Burghclere near Newbury. **Paul Gough** writes about these and their Macedonian inspiration in his chapter about Spencer and Henry Lamb, in particular Spencer's great painting of the Resurrection. Spencer served in Macedonia as an ambulance worker and later an infantry private soldier. He knew whereof he wrote and painted, and he found his inspiration, and something sacred, in the hills of Macedonia.

The other lasting memorial is the dead. Salonika and Macedonia are dotted with cemeteries perpetuating the memory of those dead in war in varying styles of the allied contingents. In his chapter 'The real Gardeners of Salonika' **Glyn Prysor** recounts the British side of this, through the story of the Imperial (later Commonwealth) War Graves Commission and its work in Macedonia. French, Serbs, Russians and Italians likewise have their resting places. So do the Greeks. Groups such as the Salonika Campaign Society help to keep alive the memories consecrated in these graves. **Helen Gardikas Katsiadakis**' account of war pensions in Greece, based on a sample from Crete, illustrates the impressive progress in pension provision achieved over the period of the Balkan wars and World War I.

Echoes of a distant past? Surveying contemporary public perceptions of the Great War

Something of the Macedonian campaign also survives in the memories and knowledge of the war passed down from participants through the generations. But if one considers the low salience of Macedonia among the *loci memoriae* of the Great War – Serbian commemorations excepted – then the reputation of the Macedonian front as a 'forgotten' one seems justified. The question remains whether things were or are different at the local level, in the northern provinces of Greece where the allied *Armée d'Orient* fought intermittently for more than three years, and where many of its men found their final resting place.

The survey referred to above, which took place under the supervision of Professors Nikos Marantzidis and Ioannis D. Stefanidis and Dr Georgios Siakas, explored and analysed the views of people in six Macedonian regions, Halkikidi, Florina, Kilkis, Pella, Serres and Thessaloniki. All were closely associated with the war. The region, which had been incorporated into Greece as recently as 1913, was taken over by the Entente's expeditionary force in October 1915, invaded by predominantly Bulgarian troops in summer 1916, and came under the Venizelos Provisional Government, in October of that year. Thus, it experienced the effects of war and mobilisation well before the Greek south, which remained under royalist governments until June 1917. Although the physical legacy of the front is now largely limited to monuments and graveyards, one might still hope to trace the echo of that not so distant past in public memory. Yet, according to the survey findings, the memories are disappointingly thin.

A number of factors attenuated public awareness of the Macedonian Front within the Greek region involved. First, public history, including school curricula and official commemorations, downplayed the events which were associated with a painful experience of 20th century-Greece, the Great Schism[10] between King Constantine and Prime Minister Venizelos. This dispute, triggered by the question of Greece's entry into the Great War, literally split the country, and dominated inter-war politics. Apart from the aversion of public memory and recorded history to past divisions, there was little room for official remembrance of events that did not reflect well on the royal dynasty, even after the monarchy was abolished in 1974. Secondly, momentous events including the Asia Minor catastrophe and the influx of hundreds of thousands of Christian refugees, the corresponding mass exodus of Muslim and Slav inhabitants from Greek Macedonia, a number of military coups and dictatorships, the Axis invasion and occupation, and the Greek Civil War of the 1940s, deeply and painfully affected the population of the region at the expense of earlier memories, including the events of 1915–18. Only through a lengthy process of learning and assimilation of their region's past could the contemporary inhabitants of Greek Macedonia, a majority of whom are of refugee origin, grasp the significance of Greece's involvement

in the Balkan Wars and, even more, in World War I, intimately related as they were to the fate of their ancestors, who did not arrive in the region until well after the 1918 armistice. In other words, to the dislocation of local populations during the Balkan Wars and in World War I was added a further and radical break with the influx of Greek refugees in and after 1923. It is not so surprising therefore that the process of learning and reasoning, according to the survey data, has remained incomplete. But it is unsatisfactory that the memory of an important part of the region's history should remain unexamined or even suppressed.

The survey included four sets of questions, designed to throw light on:

a levels of factual knowledge,
b attitudes towards other countries participating in the Great War,
c awareness, in the sense of the ability to associate events with family and local history, and
d the sources of knowledge and awareness.

The findings indicate a low level of knowledge (between 30% and 38%) regarding the circumstances in which Greece entered the war; only 43% of answers correctly identify Macedonia as the theatre of the 1915–18 operations. With regard to the image in Macedonia of the countries involved, Germany's role was assessed negatively by nearly two-thirds of the sample, though the assessment of Britain and the United States was also largely negative. More than one-third of those questioned were not aware that Greece and Serbia fought in the same camp. While 41% described the impact of World War I on their family history as 'great', only about one in ten could identify a consequence of the war or a place of memory in their vicinity. Last but not least, two-thirds of the sample attributed their 'awareness' to school education, which suggests that if school was mainly where people acquired their knowledge of the war, it was doing a poor job of it.

The results of this survey present a negative picture regarding both the level of knowledge and awareness of people in Macedonia about this crucial period in their recent past, and the effectiveness of Greek schools in remedying this situation. On the positive side, the survey, the events and commemorations connected with the centenary of World War I, including, we trust, this volume, and the activities of groups such as the Salonika Campaign Society in Britain, have done something to fill this knowledge gap. A large task still remains however, for the academic world and educational institutions in Greek Macedonia, and for concerned citizens, to help fill this gap with authentic and reliable history.

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A note on names and dates

As one of our peer reviewers commented, 'For anyone writing about the history of Macedonia in the early 20th century the forms of place names present intractable problems'. After the foundation of the Greek state in the 19th century, a long-drawn out process began whereby many place-names of non-Greek origin were replaced by ancient or pseudo-ancient names. This hellenisation of place names was formalised in the early 20th century. It took place, under official auspices, throughout Greece. Macedonia was particularly open to this process, since at the time of World War I, place names in Macedonia were an assortment of Slavic, Turkish and Greek names. Since then, with only a few exceptions, the places with Slavic and Turkish names have been given Greek names, by which they are officially known in Greece today. The fact that Bulgarian, Turkish and Greek each used a different writing system, each of which was in turn different from the Latin alphabet used in English, complicates the matter further, since there are different conventions for transliterating words from each of these languages into English. There are no simple universal rules that can be laid down. As editors, we have tried to ensure as much consistency as is reasonable.

The name Salonika occurs throughout the book, as the form generally used, alternatively with the variant spelling Salonica, by the British at this period. Thessaloniki, the official Greek name, occurs in more formal contexts.

Dates also have their complications. During the period covered by this book, Greece continued to follow the Julian calendar while the UK followed the Gregorian calendar which, at the time, was 13 days ahead of Julian. Greece adopted the Gregorian calendar in 1923. Other orthodox countries did the same at varying dates.

The Julian calendar is often referred to as Old Style (OS) and the Gregorian as New Style (NS). Thus for example the Great Fire of Salonika started on Saturday 5 August (OS)/18 August (NS) 1917. In a book of this scope, it is not possible to impose overall consistency.

Notes

1 The survey is available at https://www.hist.auth.gr/sites/default/files/Macedonian%20Front_Survey_%20Feb2018.pdf
2 We use 'The Entente' to describe the Triple Entente of Britain, France and Russia, an informal grouping formed before World War I. We use 'the central powers' to describe the alliance of Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria and the Ottoman Empire.
3 For the allied landings at Salonika, early phases of the Macedonian campaign, and construction of the Birdcage, see Palmer (1965) and Wakefield and Moody (2011).
4 The Exarchists were followers of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, independent since 1870, which was excommunicated by the Ecumenical Patriarch in Constantinople in 1872.
5 The Vlachs, also called Aromanians, were (and are, but their numbers have diminished) a population speaking a Latin-based language close to Romanian. They lived in the highlands of western (Greek) Macedonia and Epirus, and were widely spread around the Balkans. Both Romania and Greece since the 19th century had tried to win them over by offering educational facilities.
6 *Chiftlik* is the Turkish word, adopted into Greek, for the large *latifundia* in, for example, Thessaly, the subject of intense debates over land reform in the late 19th century and the first decades of the 20th.
7 Simony: the buying and selling of ecclesiastical office.
8 The fire destroyed much of the old town with its wooden houses. It is well described in Mazower (2004): 318–31.
9 The Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD) was a unit of volunteer civilians providing nursing care for military personnel in Britain and overseas, mainly during World Wars I and II.
10 The Greek term *Ethnikos Dichasmos* (literally 'National Schism') denotes the division of the nation that started in 1915 with the dispute between King Constantine and Venizelos over whether Greece should remain neutral or join the Entente. See Mavrogordatos (2015).

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Part I

The context

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1 The Salonika campaign

An overview

Ian F.W. Beckett

The Salonika campaign was a product of the tangled political (and territorial) legacies of the Balkan Wars of 1912–13, which made the military participation of as yet uncommitted Balkan states significant for both the Entente and the Central Powers. It was as much a result of internal Entente coalition politics and strategy as it was of circumstance in 1915. Just as the Great War was triggered in the Balkans by the events at Sarajevo in June 1914, so it has been argued (Stevenson 2016: 509–10) that it ended effectively in the Balkans with Bulgaria's collapse in September 1918.

Georges Clemenceau famously suggested in 1917 that, given the lack of military activity beyond digging vegetable plots, the Entente forces should be characterised as the 'gardeners' of Salonika (Palmer 1965: 71). The Germans referred to the Entente forces as occupying their largest prisoner-of-war camp. Indeed, the long periods without military activity meant that the campaign was also known for its diversions, be it the archaeological and ethnographical investigations catalogued in the chapters in this volume by Richard Clogg and John Horne (see also Shapland and Stefani 2017); fox hunting by British officers; a variety of other sports; and even notable pantomimes (Lipton 2014: 28–57; see also Richardson 2014).[1] Yet this should not detract from the difficult campaigning conditions in Macedonia, and the loss of in excess of 374,000 lives on all sides.

Bulgaria epitomised the self-interested approach of the Balkan states to the war. Its strategic position contiguous to Serbia, Greece, Romania, and Ottoman Turkey – and across the route between the latter and Austria-Hungary – made it a useful prospective partner for both the Entente and the Central Powers once Turkey entered the war on the German side in October 1914. Moreover, Bulgaria had lost out to its former allies in the Balkan Wars of 1912–13. Together with Greece, Montenegro and Serbia, Bulgaria had forced Turkey out of much of its remaining European territory in the First Balkan War in 1912, but the allies had fallen out over the division of the spoils. Greece and Serbia defeated Bulgaria in the Second Balkan War in 1913 and Romania and Turkey both intervened to seize disputed territory from Bulgaria. In the process, Greece increased its population by some two million and its territory by 70% while Serbia doubled its size and increased

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its population by 1.5 million (Beckett 2007: 25, 110). Greece was compelled to surrender some of its additional gains through the post-war treaties of 1913–14 but Bulgaria was still left humiliated, with Macedonia divided between Serbia and Greece, and South Dobrudja falling to Romania. Bulgaria's finance minister, Dimitar Tonchev, remarked that either the great powers would have to change the settlement, 'or we ourselves will destroy it' (Hall 2000: 215). Bulgaria, therefore, was highly susceptible to blandishments especially from the Central Powers.

The Entente was prepared to try to force Serbia to make territorial concessions to the Bulgarians in Macedonia (Robbins 1971: 560–85), but it had less to offer beyond Turkish territory, since the Entente wished to bring both Greece and Romania into the war as well. In any case, King Ferdinand – a German from the house of Saxe-Coburg Gotha – and his prime minister, Vasil Radoslavov, were sympathetic towards the Central Powers. Nonetheless, Bulgaria was mindful of the progress of the respective sides. The Entente failure at the Dardanelles and the success for German and Austro-Hungarian armies on the Eastern Front in 1915, together with the possibility that Romania would later join the Entente, tilted the balance in favour of the Central Powers. Accordingly, in return for the promise of all of Macedonia, the return of the Maritsa valley from Turkey, access to the Adriatic, and a corridor between Bulgaria and Austria-Hungary along the Danube, Bulgaria attacked Serbia without a declaration of war on 5 October 1915. Britain declared war on Bulgaria on 15 October and France on the following day (Damianov 1985: 157–69; Hall 2003: 389–414). Italy and Russia both declared war on Bulgaria on 19 October 1915.

From the outbreak of the war, Greek Prime Minister Eleftherios Venizelos had looked for a way to bring Greece in on the side of Britain and France, even offering to join the Entente in August 1914. This early offer was turned down for fear that accepting it would provoke Turkey into joining the war, and because Greek claims would clash with Russian regional ambitions and with those of Italy. However, by the autumn of 1915 matters had moved on. Turkey had entered the war on the side of the Central Powers. Italy had joined the Entente in May 1915. It was in these circumstances that, at the invitation of Venizelos, British and French forces landed at Salonika on 5 October 1915.

The ostensible aim of the invitation was to deter Bulgaria from acting against Serbia. Greece was obliged to assist Serbia under the terms of the Greek-Serbian defensive treaty of May 1913. The extent of Greece's obligations to Serbia under this treaty became a major component in the disagreements between Venizelos and King Constantine that precipitated the 'National Schism'. Knowing the King's views, Venizelos, nevertheless, had issued his invitation to the British and French on 24 September 1915, Bulgaria having started to mobilise three days earlier. Constantine, who Venizelos claimed had initially approved the invitation, changed his mind on 3 October and insisted on Venizelos' resignation. Thus began the great

schism of the Greek nation. But by then the die was cast, and German and Bulgarian forces confronted the Entente on Greek soil.

The Central Powers' offensive against Serbia resulted in the fall of Belgrade on 9 October, compelling the Serbs to retreat through Albania to the sea and to evacuate their remaining troops to the Greek island of Corfu, which the French occupied. Ultimately, a pro-Venizelos coup was mounted at Salonika in August 1916, in the name of a National Defence Movement. Venizelos declared a provisional government on his native Crete, moved to Salonika, and declared war on Germany and Bulgaria on 23 November 1916. With Constantine's enforced departure from Greece at the insistence of the Entente, Venizelos returned to Athens in June 1917, and officially declared war on behalf of all of Greece on 27 June. Accordingly, Greek forces participated in the Salonika campaign thereafter (for an overview see Leon 1974, 1990).

The French components, the largest element in the Entente forces, included colonial formations. The British forces included medical staff from the Dominions and they were supported by Maltese and Indian Labour Corps and the, largely Cypriot, Macedonian Mule Corps. Italian and Russian forces also served in Macedonia with the Entente. Ultimately, more than 645,000 men served with the Entente forces between 1915 and 1918 (approximately 228,000 in the British Salonika Force). The Bulgarian and German defenders were supplemented by some Austro-Hungarian units, though Vienna's focus was always more on the Adriatic and the Italian front. From 1917, Ottoman forces also arrived, the Central Powers deploying around 600,000 men.

Those who fought at Salonika represented the most diverse participants in any World War I campaign. This was true even of the combat formations within the British Salonika Force, commanded initially by Major General Sir Bryan Mahon and, from May 1916, by Lieutenant General Sir George Milne. They eventually comprised six divisions: the 10th, 22nd, 26th, 27th, 28th and 60th. The 10th, 22nd and 26th were 'Kitchener' New Army divisions raised from the citizen volunteers of 1914, the 10th (Irish) Division additionally reflecting some of the conflicting loyalties of Irishmen in 1914, since between 30% and 40% of its initial rank and file were not from Ireland at all (Beckett, Bowman and Connelly 2017: 109). The 27th and 28th had been formed from regular troops brought back from imperial garrisons in 1914. The 60th (2/2nd London) Division was a second-line Territorial division. All had served on the Western Front and the 10th had additionally been at Gallipoli. Similarly, of the nine French divisions eventually represented, only the 30th Division was an active pre-war formation, with the remainder formed in 1914. Three of the latter – the 11th, 16th and 17th – were colonial divisions; the 17th had also been at Gallipoli.

The Entente was at least morally obliged to assist its Serbian ally when Bulgaria attacked it, but the Salonika campaign was very much a product of conflicting allied coalition objectives. The French commander-in-chief

on the Western Front, Joseph Joffre, had unsuccessfully resisted the French government's desire to participate in the Dardanelles campaign. His reluctance to divert forces from the Western Front was undermined by the political need to find a significant command for the radical Republican general, Maurice Sarrail, whom he had removed from the Third Army in July 1915. In August Sarrail, who would have succeeded Joffre in the autumn of 1914 if the war had not broken out, received the command of an 'Armée d'Orient' – its name consciously echoing Napoleon's expedition to Egypt in 1799 – but Joffre continued to refuse to release men for the Dardanelles (Cassar 1971: 35–40, 151–80; Tannenbaum 1974: 55–74; Dutton 1998: 17–48).

Ultimately, Sarrail's army was committed to Salonika in October 1915. The failure at the Dardanelles and of Joffre's own offensives played a part in the fall of the Viviani ministry in October 1915. The Foreign Minister, Théophile Delcassé, initiated the governmental crisis by resigning in opposition to further Balkan adventures at Salonika. Joseph-Simon Galliéni, already senior in the military hierarchy to Joffre, became Minister of War in Aristide Briand's new ministry. Initially, the attempt by Galliéni and Briand to reduce Joffre's power by creating an allied co-ordinating council, failed. Indeed, Joffre was elevated to commander-in-chief of all French armies in December 1915, largely to ensure that he took Salonika seriously. Criticism of Joffre persisted during the German Verdun offensive in the course of 1916, and in December he was persuaded by Briand to accept the purely nominal post of technical adviser to the government with the Salonika command once more divorced from that of the armies in France (Dutton 1978: 338–51).

While Serbia had been a diplomatic client of Russia, it was also a military client of France in terms of financial loans and military equipment and training (Prete 2001: 53). However, economic aims were also evident in the French interest in the Salonika expedition, which seemingly offered great opportunities in Asia Minor and Persia. France maintained its interest in Syria and Lebanon. As a result of promises made by her, Italy might become a major economic regional player after the war, necessitating further protection for French trading interests. Thus, Sarrail carefully advanced French economic aims, ensuring that 75% of the imports reaching Salonika's nearly 200,000 inhabitants were French (Dutton 1979: 97–113, 1998: 143–66).

The British joined in the Salonika campaign because their participation was requested by the French and Russians rather than because there was any confidence that such a venture could assist Serbia. There was recognition of the need to find a worthwhile command for Sarrail, and the British continued to support the venture largely as a means of preserving Briand's ministry. Britain's commander-in-chief on the Western Front, Sir John French, was just as opposed to the diversion of troops to Salonika as Joffre. At the same time, just as the French did not trust the British to act alone at the Dardanelles, the British could not afford to allow the French to act alone at Salonika. The Secretary of State for War, Field Marshal Lord Kitchener, was reluctant to see the deployed British troops advance beyond Salonika

until such time as Greece formally entered the war. This became problematic with the fall of Venizelos in October 1915.

The British continued to drag their feet (Prete 2001: 59). At the allied conference at Chantilly on 6 December 1915, the British argued unsuccessfully for the abandonment of the expedition. The 22nd, 26th, 27th and 28th Divisions arrived in November and December 1915 to join the 10th but in the end Salonika did not receive significant British reinforcements other than the 60th Division in November 1916, as the campaign was seen in London to serve French rather than British interests (Dutton 1986: 64–78, 1998: 49–115, 143, 197). The 60th Division was withdrawn to Egypt for the Palestine campaign in June 1917, followed by the 10th Division in September, and the other four British divisions lost units to the Western Front amid the manpower crisis in early 1918.

The initial landing at Salonika was made by the British 10th (Irish) Division and French 156th Infantry Division, both withdrawn from the failing Gallipoli campaign. Followed by the British, the French advanced northwards through the Vardar valley and over the Serbian frontier on 15 October 1915, amid deteriorating weather conditions in a difficult terrain of rocky ridges and deep ravines. The Entente forces were critically short of artillery. A Bulgarian offensive around Kosturino on 6 December compelled the British and French to retire on Salonika but had given the Serbs time to complete their own retreat into Albania. The Germans were not prepared to allow Bulgarian forces to cross the Greek frontier, reasoning that driving the Entente back into the sea might suggest to the Bulgarians that their aims had been achieved, whereas containing the Entente forces at Salonika served wider strategic purposes (Hall 2010: 55, 2011: 305–6). One Bulgarian general had already reportedly remarked after the defeat of Serbia, 'For us Bulgarians the war is over. We have all we want' (Palmer 1965: 58). Consequently, the British and French were able to establish the 'birdcage' defensive position – so named from the extent of barbed wire – on a range of hills some seven to ten miles north of Salonika, despite the harsh winter conditions.

Sarrail's decision to advance in 1916, reluctantly conceded by the British, not only meant the abandonment of the 'birdcage' line but also defined the nature of the campaign until September 1918. The Macedonian terrain was a mixture of valleys and plains on the one hand and of hills, ravines and mountains on the other, confronting troops with a variety of conflicting tactical problems. There were substantial problems in the lack of means of communications, with mules the only realistic means at first of supplying the front, necessitating significant road and railway construction as well as attention to water supplies. The French even opened lignite mines in May 1918, to reduce dependence on imported coal supplies (Bernède 1998: 43–59; Varnava 2006: 489–515). Moreover, the climate was one of extremes, from the excessively high temperatures endured between April and September to the incessant rain, blizzards and freezing conditions between October and

March. The 10th Division, for example, had 1,666 cases of frostbite or exposure between October and December 1915 (Wakefield and Moody 2004: 20).

Malaria in the summer months proved the greatest danger, not least to British forces operating around Lake Doiran and the River Struma (see chapter by Mark Harrison in this volume). During the campaign as a whole, the British Salonika Force had more than 481,262 non-battle casualties, of whom 162,517 succumbed to malaria, the ratio of non-battle to battle casualties (some 18,187) being 20:1. The French had more than 66,000 cases of malaria, and the German and Bulgarians had more than 21,000 (Harrison 2010: 230–39; Braben 2014). The 'gardening' to which Clemenceau referred was part of the effort to reduce stagnant water by converting areas to agricultural use where previously cultivated or otherwise. As Harrison demonstrates, French methods of combating malaria were not notably more successful than those of the British, whatever subsequent perceptions.

Now with five British, four French and six Serb divisions, Sarrail aimed to divert further German resources from the Western Front but also to encourage Greece and Romania to commit to the Entente cause. Buoyed by apparent Russian success in its summer offensive on the Eastern Front, Romania on 4 July 1916 indicated its willingness to join the Entente provided an offensive from Salonika was forthcoming. Romania declared war on Austria-Hungary on 27 August. Germany retaliated with a counter-declaration on 28 August and Bulgaria attacked Romania without initial declaration on 31 August. In the event, with German agreement, the Bulgarians also preempted Sarrail by launching their own offensive on 17 August, intended in part to deter the Romanians and Greeks as well as pin the Entente forces in place should Romania enter the war. The Bulgarian offensive against Salonika ran out of momentum as it reached the Struma, and Sarrail was able to orchestrate his riposte on 12 September 1916. Two French divisions and the Russian 2nd Special Infantry Brigade would advance on Monastir on the left with two Serb divisions attacking the Bulgarian centre at Kaimakchalan Mountain. The British with the remaining French and an Italian division would sweep around Lake Doiran and across the Struma. The Serbs managed to achieve their objective after a hard struggle but the other attacks were held, and heavy rainfall intervened to prevent any further attempt, although the Bulgarians evacuated Monastir on 19 November.

Newly appointed as commander-in-chief of what was now designated the 'Allied Army of the Orient', Sarrail aimed for an all-out offensive along the whole 250-mile front in the spring of 1917, though the allied Calais conference in February 1917 resolved that the defeat of the Bulgarians was impractical and that the aim should be only to pin them down (Falls 1933: 296). The Serbs would attack from the Moglena Mountains while French and Italian forces would advance along the River Crna and the British along the River Struma. Maintaining that he had insufficient manpower and that the Struma was malaria-ridden, Milne proposed instead to attack around Lake Doiran. This was actually overlooked by Bulgarian forces on surrounding

hills, notably the well-fortified 'Devil's Eye' feature. Artillery fire was ineffective and the British suffered more than 3,000 casualties on 25 April while the Bulgarians suffered only 835. A second assault on 8–9 May was no more successful and cost more than 1,800 casualties (Wakefield and Moody 2004: 81, 97). The Russian 2nd Special Infantry Brigade again took heavy losses when left unsupported by the Italians. With the French and Serbs unwilling to risk further losses, Sarrail's offensive failed.

With Venizelos' return to power in Athens in June 1917, Greek forces that had maintained an uneasy presence in the region – they had simply surrendered territory to the Bulgarian advance in August 1916 – were now available. As demonstrated in George Mavrogordatos' chapter in this volume, however, the attempt to initiate mass mobilisation through conscription proved just as unpopular as it had in those areas previously under Venizelist control, resulting in mutinies. Rumours surrounding the leave arrangements of the French contingent in July also brought mutiny in one division when it was believed that there would be no furloughs. A serious fire in Salonika on 18 August 1917, destroyed almost half the city, adding to the sense of malaise given the entertainment value provided by the cosmopolitan city (Wakefield and Moody 2004: 157–64; Papastathis and Hekimoglu 2010). The collapse of the Tsarist government in Russia and the subsequent political uncertainties then brought mutiny in the Russian units. There had been trouble with the 2nd Special Infantry Brigade even before it left Marseille in July 1916, and subsequent reinforcing drafts to the two Russian brigades had arrived with increasing disaffection. The 16,000 men of what was now a Russian division were disarmed in January 1918. The most disaffected were deported to North Africa and most of the rest were formed into labour companies. As Milne remarked, 'the whole damn lot has gone Bolshie on us' (Spence 1986: 426).

Both Milne and his Serbian counterpart had wanted Sarrail replaced, and the new French Prime Minister, Georges Clemenceau, obliged in December 1917, when Army of the Orient papers were found in the offices of the suppressed radical publication, *Le Bonnet Rouge*. Having enjoyed some success in restoring morale among mutinous French troops on the Western Front in 1917, and with significant experience of colonial formations, Marie-Louis-Adolphe Guillaumat did much to improve French relations with the British and Serbian forces and removed a number of French senior officers. Serbian strength was restored through the recruitment of Serbs from the Austro-Hungarian army who had been taken prisoner by the Russians and were now returned to the West. Guillaumat, however, was recalled to France to command the Paris defences in June 1918 and replaced by Louis Franchet d'Esperey. The latter had been criticised for some of the French losses in the face of the German spring offensives on the Western Front, but was too good a soldier to remain unemployed.

The Serbs believed that an attack in the Moglena Mountains on the old frontier between Greece and Serbia offered the opportunity to initiate a

Bulgarian collapse despite the difficult terrain. To assist six Serbian divisions, Franchet d'Esperey made two French divisions available, but it was only in August that the Entente's Supreme War Council could be persuaded to allow the offensive. The British had again argued against it. On 15 September 1918, heavy artillery, secretly moved into position, mounted the same kind of short hurricane bombardment now familiar on the Western Front. The French and Serbs had Stokes mortars borrowed from the British and used flamethrowers for the first time in Macedonia. With only 32 German batteries and three infantry battalions remaining in the theatre to reinforce them despite the nominal presence of the German Eleventh Army (Hall 2011: 309), the Bulgarians fell into the trap of massing troops in the front line without the capability of counter-attacking. Živojin Mišić's First Serbian Army took the heights of Dobro Pole on 17 September (Hall 2010: 126–45). The British, supported by two newly raised Greek divisions, then advanced around Lake Doiran on 18 September but were unable to match the success enjoyed by the Serbs. Milne's request for additional heavy artillery had been largely ignored, and the gas supplies he hoped would supplement the bombardment were also delayed because of the greater priority accorded the Western Front. As in the first battle of Doiran, the 7,000 British and Greek casualties were greater than the 2,700 suffered by the Bulgarians (Falls 1935: 182). The British and Greek advance was always intended as an operation to fix Bulgarian reserves in place, with no expectation that it would succeed in any other sense (Collinson Owen 1919: 244–5). In many respects, the British contribution to the ultimate breakthrough should be seen in terms of logistic support such as light railway construction, re-equipment of Greek forces, aerial reconnaissance and also naval support. The latter kept the sea lanes open in the face of the German submarine threat in the Mediterranean and potential intervention by Turkish naval forces through the Dardanelles, though the German battlecruiser *Goeben* ran aground and the cruiser *Breslau* was sunk by mines during a sortie in January 1918 (Birch 2017: Chapters 2 and 3).

The German supreme commander in Bulgaria, Friedrich von Scholtz, believed it would be possible to retire and then attack the resulting allied salient; but Bulgarian morale was now fragile, especially as allied airpower was being brought to bear significantly for the first time (see Wakefield and Moody 2004: 183–97 for air operations). The Bulgarian left crumbled under renewed assault, and Franchet d'Esperey ordered the French colonial cavalry to advance on Skopje, which was taken on 28 September after a 60-mile advance across the broken terrain.

The Bulgarians had always been treated with condescension by the Germans and Austro-Hungarians (Iliev 1986: 318–29). In the absence of any domestic arms industry, they had also been entirely dependent on Germany (Berov 1985: 170–83). Having frequently warned Germany of the deteriorating position without receiving a response; facing critical shortages of food; distrustful of their allies; with mutinous units threatening to march on Sofia, and resentful that Bulgaria had not acquired the Dobrudja from the Treaty

of Bucharest which was imposed on the defeated Romanians in March 1918, King Ferdinand requested an armistice on 27 September (Crampton 1998: 255–65; Hall 2004: 209–19). It was concluded on 30 September and Ferdinand abdicated in favour of his son, Boris on 4 October 1918.

As suggested by Hew Strachan, much was made by Paul von Hindenburg and Erich Ludendorff in their post-war memoirs of the significance for Germany of the Bulgarian collapse. Indeed, Ludendorff suffered a nervous collapse on 28 September and urged Hindenburg to seek an armistice. Clearly, Bulgaria's surrender suggested the fragile nature of the unity of the Central Powers, and the loss of Bulgaria threatened to cut Germany off from the Romanian oil fields as well as eliminating 14 Bulgarian divisions from the military equation. In theory, the Entente forces could now put pressure on both Austria-Hungary and Turkey. Five German divisions rushed to Bulgaria made no difference to Bulgarian resolve to end hostilities.

Thus, it is often suggested that the Bulgarian collapse was the catalyst for the final defeat of Germany (Watson 2015: 540). The army Group Commander, Crown Prince Rupprecht of Bavaria, however, was one who believed that emphasis on Bulgarian collapse served as an excuse for failures on the Western Front, a view shared by the Bavarian military plenipotentiary at German General Headquarters (OHL), Paul Ritter von Köberle (Stevenson 2016: 510; Boff 2018: 240). Equally, Franchet d'Esperey's visions of further advance to Belgrade, Vienna and even to Berlin ignored logistic realities and the outbreak of influenza in his forces. In any case, as Strachan shows, his allies in the theatre had other agendas. Franchet d'Esperey was instructed to limit his offensive on 21 September and, even after the breakthrough, directed to assume a defensive line on 7 October 1918.

The precise link between the collapse of the Bulgarian army at Salonika in September 1918 and the defeat of Germany remains a matter of debate (see Hew Strachan's chapter in this volume). Undoubtedly, however, events on the Macedonian Front signalled the beginning of the end for the Central Powers, rendering meaning to an unjustly forgotten theatre of war.

Note

1 Richardson goes beyond the British Salonika Force to discuss all British wartime involvement in Macedonia, including the many women serving as nurses or in other roles with the Serbs.

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2 Unintended colonialism? The Armée Française d'Orient and Macedonia

John Horne

The Franco-British force that began arriving in Salonika in October 1915 did not intend to stay. It came, as we know, in an unsuccessful bid to secure Serbia against its final invasion by the Central Powers. But stay the Allies did, awkward guests in a Greece to which it was not clear they had been invited, in a region that was not obviously or entirely Greek, given its history and ethnic complexity. As Macedonia turned into one of the fronts that ringed Europe in a war of mutual siege, the large hinterland over which the Allies ruled under overall French command –with Salonika as its bastion and administrative hub – became an occupied territory. But what kind of occupation was it? To answer this question, I shall focus on the French army and propose a hypothesis: namely, that the occupation was in many ways colonial.

The expeditionary tradition

Of course, if the hypothesis proves correct, this would be unintended colonialism since neither the French nor the British wanted permanent direct control over any part of Greece. On the contrary, they wished Greece to enter the war on their side. While this meant intervening in the 'national schism' and thus interfering in internal Greek affairs, it was different from their goal (once the Young Turks entered the war) of breaking up the Ottoman Empire and seizing its Arab provinces. The British would enter into a fatal pact with Greek nationalism via their alliance with Venizelos, who wanted to use the *megali idea* (or the 'great idea' of a revival of the Byzantine Empire) rather more prosaically to incorporate the industrious Greeks around Smyrna into a modern Greece straddling the Aegean. This meant partitioning not just the Ottoman Arab provinces but Anatolia as a whole, and in the 'greater war' that lasted until 1923, resulted in political defeat for Lloyd George and the great 'disaster' for Greece. The Allies therefore pressured Greece as a nation-state and junior partner, not as a colony.

Yet the Allied expedition to Macedonia from 1915 to 1918 must also be seen in the context of expeditions by the major European powers to the southern and eastern margins of their own continent and to North Africa

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and the Levant beyond. This tradition had developed across the long 19th century – from Napoleon's Egyptian adventure in 1798 to the French and British conquests of Algeria and Egypt respectively. It included German diplomatic aspirations in the Levant leading to German military involvement in the Ottoman Empire before 1914, something that expanded to a guiding role exercised via some 20,000 military advisers during World War I. Moreover, at almost exactly the same time the Allies invested Macedonia, the German army occupied swathes of north-eastern Europe (current Lithuania and Belorussia), following in the footsteps of the many German soldiers who had marched through the same region with Napoleon's Grande Armée in 1812.

Features of this 'expeditionary' tradition included the journey to a distant land (often by sea), war against a more 'primitive' (though not always inferior) enemy and encounters with inhabitants who were different and potentially dangerous. The latter had to be controlled, measured, understood and improved. Yet the encounter was complicated by the fact that these lands were often the sites of ancient civilisations to which Europe itself looked for its roots. This was true of Greece as of Egypt and Palestine (but not of 'barbaric' Russia). The romantic Hellenism that had led France and Britain to support Greek independence was part of this fascination by Europeans with the sources of their own civilisation. Amongst other things, the tension between classical antiquity and the backward state of the land and its people (in the eyes of the expeditionary force) caused tensions over patrimony and heritage, from art to archaeology. The hypothesis applies to the British as well as the French component of the Allied force, and possibly to the Italians, too. In what follows, the focus will remain on the Armée Française d'Orient (AFO) since investigating the other two cases would require equivalent work in the archives. But like Gallipoli, Macedonia is crying out for comparative work, including with the enemy, where Germans and Austrians had similarly asymmetrical relations with their Bulgarian allies. It is a privileged observatory for studying the fronts of World War I.

The 'civilising mission'

What evidence is there that the AFO fitted this tradition in Macedonia? It comes, firstly, from the AFO's sense of its 'civilising mission'. Any expeditionary force encounters difference; but the degree of difference turns on the nature of the societies it goes to and on the ideological filters through which it sees them. Campaigns on the edges of Europe, along with more distant colonisation, had given the French and British a hierarchical view of the world in terms of 'civilisation' (meaning the successive phases of human development, both moral and material) and also ethnicity. Ethnicity included traditions, customs and folklore, such as food, dress and relations between the sexes. As such, it was an extension of how the French and British understood their own more remote regions (Brittany or Ireland). But

the 'scientific' language of race in a Darwinian world made ethnography (or cultural anthropology) the queen of disciplines in applying ethnicity to colonialism. Foreign cultures were perceived in terms of race, religion and peoples, which the coloniser would organise, adapt and modernise in the name of his 'civilising mission'.

Arriving in Salonika, with its crammed streets, domes, minarets and the striking White Tower, French soldiers, like the British, reached for both classical and orientalist stereotypes. 'What a multi-coloured crowd on the quayside! Caftans, turbans, western suits in the latest style, black robes and scarlet fezzes like poppies', exclaimed Etienne Burnet (1921: 6–7), a bacteriologist from the Institut Pasteur, who was part of the French anti-malaria campaign. Strolling through the tumble-down streets with their magnificent ruins, he commented: 'wretched and splendid, just like the orient'. Burnet's reaction was repeated endlessly in the letters, diaries and photographs of French officers and soldiers (like those of their British counterparts) as they encountered a Salonika and Macedonia that both fascinated them but also failed to live up to their preconceptions of classical Greece.

Certain issues highlighted the difference especially sharply. One was the exotic but untouchable women who (outside the brothels of Salonika) seemed either to be cloistered by their men-folk or treated like beasts of burden. Another was the maltreatment of the actual beast of burden, the donkey, which offended the urban British in particular. Roger Irriera, a French soldier artist, captured both points in a watercolour painting that he pointedly entitled 'His wife, his sons and the ass' (see Figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1 Mistreatment of women and animals. Roger Irriera, 'His wife, his sons and the ass'. Watercolour.

Source: Musée d'Histoire Contemporaine (MHC), Paris. By permission of Patrick Jouanneau and La Contemporaine.

A third issue, to which the French soldiers, many of them peasants, may have been more susceptible than the British, was in their eyes the lamentable state of agriculture. As Etienne Burnet (1921: 62, 1 May 1917) travelled along the front on his anti-malaria work, he noted the *poilus'* disapproval: 'Ah! If only we had land like that', they would say, deploring in particular the wretched wine. In 1917, older French soldiers were put in charge of the harvest in Thessaly. But as Burnet (1921: 123, July 1917) ruefully asked: 'Have the French territorials conquered Thessaly or has Thessaly conquered the territorials?' Soldiers on all fronts grumbled about prices, and rural soldiers often commented on farming in the lands to which the war brought them. But in Macedonia the gap was very wide.

These perceived material and cultural differences helped define the 'civilising mission' which aimed precisely to bridge the gap and to benefit the Macedonians as much as the Allied war effort. To give but one example: the 227th Infantry Regiment (IR) compiled a report in 1918 on its *oeuvre* (achievements) in 'the Orient', including drawings and photographs.[1] The regiment (raised in Dijon) arrived early in 1917 and spent most of the campaign in the mountains near the Albanian frontier. According to its official history, the men were 'surprised' at the 'costumes and customs of these oriental populations' (n.a. 1920: 10). As part of its 'work', the regiment undertook various building projects. It set up its own brick kiln, built fountains, piped water to villages, upgraded and repainted houses and encouraged the inhabitants 'by following our example, to improve the hygiene of their land' (Figure 2.2). It built bridges, turned mule tracks into roads and, by means of irrigation, established market gardens. It eliminated stagnant pools that bred mosquitoes and included civilians in the battle against malaria. All this, according to the colonel, had helped make 'this Macedonian population, initially so mistrustful, come to love France'. This was the civilising mission on the front, but it characterised the self-understanding of the French army more generally.[2]

The ethnographic reflex

Nonetheless, this begged the question of who the 'Macedonian population' actually was, and that elicited the equally characteristic ethnographic reflex on which the civilising mission was premised. It provides the second type of evidence that the AFO engaged with Macedonia in a colonial frame of mind. We find it in the soldiers' fascination with the 'costumes and customs' of the natives that I noted in the case of the 227th IR. Captain Schaller of the 17th Division artillery went so far as to have photos taken of himself in native costume in his command post, which he then put into the album that he made of his Macedonian Odyssey.[3] Perhaps he had read Pierre Loti's heart-rending yet brutally imperialist *Aziyadé*, the 1879 memoir-novel about love in Salonika and Istanbul which had proved a runaway success and provided one source for Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*.[4] Perhaps anything served

Figure 2.2 Brick fountain built by the 227th IR in 1917 at Lake Prespa (frontier of Greek Macedonia and Bulgarian-occupied Serb Macedonia).
Source: Ink drawing, SHD 20N 807, Rapport sur l'oeuvre du 227e RI.

to dispel the isolation of the Albanian frontier (he was also photographed with local women of whom, however, he made no mention). We shall never know.

However, the ethnographic reflex was far more systematic than Captain Schaller's antics because the security of the entire Allied Army of the Orient and its ability to conduct operations depended on controlling the territory and knowing who lived there. Aware that the inhabitants included local Bulgarians and Muslims (or 'Turks'), who might favour the enemy or even act as spies and guerrillas, the French tried to categorise a population that did not easily fit ethno-national terms. Ironically, they shared the problem with the new Greek authorities, who were also often hostile to the Allies (Sarrail 2012: 87–96). French military intelligence intercepted a report from the new Greek governor of western Macedonia which remarked on how the diverse peoples of the region were made up 'firstly of persons who have no sense of national belonging'.[5] The response was to map, count and assign identities in true colonial mode.

As it happened, the anti-malaria campaign required a 'malaria map' based on a survey of residents of the Macedonian plain (especially children,

who displayed the symptoms most clearly) in order to find the infectious black spots. Indeed, because it was the native population that harboured the microbe, with the mosquito acting only as the carrier, the disease was a peculiarly lethal version of the general relationship between a 'backward' population and Allied soldiers (Sergent and Sergent 1932: 12–3). In this case, the civilising mission meant medical mapping as well as science and prophylaxis. Significantly, Edmond and Etienne Sergent, the two doctors who headed the anti-malaria campaign in Macedonia in 1917, following the crisis the year before in which a large part of the AFO had been incapacitated with the malady, both came from Algeria, where they had spent 15 years dealing with it. They made a real difference, with infections dropping steadily for the remainder of the war. In this case, the army simply transferred colonial medical know-how from North Africa to Greece.

But the broader relationship with the indigenous population required ethnographic inquiries. We still do not know how widespread these were. But by mid-1918, the AFO was conducting a census in the central section of the front around Monastir/ Bitola (captured from the enemy in Serb Macedonia). Working from a 20-question template, this listed for each locality the number of men, women and children (with ethnic categories and religious affiliation), the livestock, farm implements and kinds of housing (often with drawings), economic resources, communications and manpower. It also itemised archaeological and historic sites.[6] The enquiry went beyond economic data, and while knowing the ethnic make-up of the area was clearly relevant for security in a region supposedly friendly to Bulgaria, the cultural information responded to a deeper need to know more about the people.[7] If information on some localities was summary, other answers were surprisingly full. The report on Bukovo detailed the customs relating to baptism and marriage, folk tales and superstitions, such as that according to which Tuesday was unlucky since it was the day of the week when Constantinople fell in 1453.

Ethnographic enquiry was above all the work of military intelligence, which meant the AFO's Second Bureau. As in any theatre, military intelligence had many worries including espionage and counter-espionage, propaganda, assessing enemy plans, monitoring politics and public opinion and postal surveillance. A talented array of young, university-educated officers staffed the Bureau, several of them (including the director, Charles Picard) recruited from the École Française d'Athènes (EFA). They brought to their work the passion for classical, Byzantine and modern Greek studies which marked the EFA plus a knowledge of the relevant languages and a deep interest in the contemporary Balkans more widely.[8]

Thus Charles Picard spent the summer of 1918 at Korytsa (Albanian Korçë), a city of mixed ethnicity disputed by Greece and Albania, which the French ran from 1916 to 1920 as an autonomous republic despite Greek claims to it. It was in this context that Picard produced an ethnographic survey of the region for the French army replete with an analysis not just of

ethnic, linguistic and religious affiliations (including an 'Aromanian' group speaking a Latin-derived language akin to Romanian) but also of the history and folk tales from which the communities drew their different identities. Photographs of what he referred to as 'national' costume and drawings of typical dress and dwellings completed the survey.[9]

It is not clear how Picard's survey was used but it may have fed later deliberations by the great powers and the League of Nations on the fate of the region, which was awarded to Albania in 1922. Borders were a burning issue post war and at least one of the Second Bureau officers (and head of its political section), the geographer Jacques Ancel, became an expert on both the Balkans and 'geo-politics' in general (Ancel 1921, 1936, 1992). In this sense, the well-established tradition of using academic and scientific expertise to establish the best basis for conducting an expeditionary campaign and dealing with the local population applied to Macedonia. Universal military service meant that the French army could draw at will on the talent it needed as well as on a long-standing commitment to classical Greece embodied by the EFA.

Cultural 'patrimony'

It is important to note that the tension over 'patrimony' already mentioned was intrinsic to the expeditionary tradition. Much work has been done on Allied archaeology in Macedonia. I simply want to note here that the French drew on the tradition going back to Napoleon in Egypt to justify investigating and conserving the region's 'patrimony'. The term had gained currency with the destruction of cultural monuments (such as Rheims cathedral) during the German invasion in 1914, sparking a bitter row over the barbarity of the enemy. More than ever, preserving the cultural heritage of the land where the fighting took place was claimed as an attribute of civilised armies. Yet in a colonial context, supposed local backwardness raised the question of whose patrimony it was and of who would best preserve it – something that might easily lead to expropriation or outright looting. As a French army circular declared: 'Soldiers are strictly forbidden to carry away any objects of artistic or archaeological value'.[10]

Mount Athos illustrates the tensions. The fabled isthmus with its cluster of Orthodox monasteries lay well inside Allied-controlled Greek Macedonia. Not only did it harbour Bulgarian monks but it defied national categorisation and troubled the Second Bureau, which felt that 'the monks of Mount Athos enjoy a reputation that justifies every suspicion'.[11] By late 1917, the French army had taken it over. This allowed the extraordinary riches of the various monasteries to be documented, something that both French and Russian specialists on Byzantine art history had begun in the 19th century. Now, the leading French scholar in the field, Gabriel Millet, was able to undertake a systematic inventory of frescos using the resources of the French army's Photographic Service, which the EFA completed just after the war.

The plates went back to Paris to the Athos Archive set up by Millet at the Collège de France.[12] Nothing illustrates better how war allowed expeditionary Europeans to enter sacred spaces with 'scientific' purpose – as expressed by the style of their photography, which de-contextualised and objectified the art and artefacts. Was the record made for the monks, a Greek state that wished to Hellenise Mount Athos or the greater glory of French Byzantine studies? Whatever the answer, the inventory would not have existed without the self-ascribed cultural role of the AFO.

Lateral colonial encounters

The argument that Macedonia was a colonial enterprise raises one last issue – the presence and role of colonial troops. Was there a higher proportion of these than in France? Did the AFO bring the empire to Macedonia and, if so, with what repercussions? Here is not the place to go into detail on colonial service in the French army. But overall some 475,000 native soldiers were recruited (mainly from North and West Africa), representing 5.7% of the total of over eight million and 5.2% of the dead and missing.[13] It is not yet possible to calculate the exact colonial presence or death rate in Macedonia, but this was far higher than in the overall picture, which was dominated by the western front. Already the French force at Gallipoli (which became the avant-garde for Salonika) was two thirds colonial but also two thirds white, since it included elite French colonial regiments and settlers from North Africa. Reluctance to use North African Muslims against the 'Turks' meant that the non-Europeans were from West Africa.

A Christian Bulgarian enemy presented no such problem, so native North African soldiers as well as the legendary *tirailleurs sénégalais* fought in Macedonia, while Indo-Chinese and Malgache troops worked as labourers. By mid-1918, three of the eight French infantry divisions were colonial but at least one of the others (the 156th Division) had some colonial units. Also, it is likely that many service units and the non-divisional elements (including Zouaves and North African cavalry) were made up of settler and native soldiers from North and West Africa. Of a total complement of 221,000 French soldiers, therefore, 47,000 (or 21%) were certainly colonial but the real total was higher, possibly in excess of a third (France 1923, vol. 8/3: 517, table II).

This is not surprising. Both the French and the British habitually used colonial soldiers for colonial campaigns and both sought to release European troops from Macedonia and the Middle East to fight in France, especially in the crisis of 1918. There were at least two consequences. First, it may help explain the strength of the 'civilising mission' and the 'ethnographic reflex'. For these were ingrained in colonial officers and also in French settlers, soldiers and officials from Algeria whose military history during the Great War remains to be written.[14] As already mentioned, the Sergent brothers, who led the anti-malarial campaign, pioneered their work in Algeria. Perhaps it

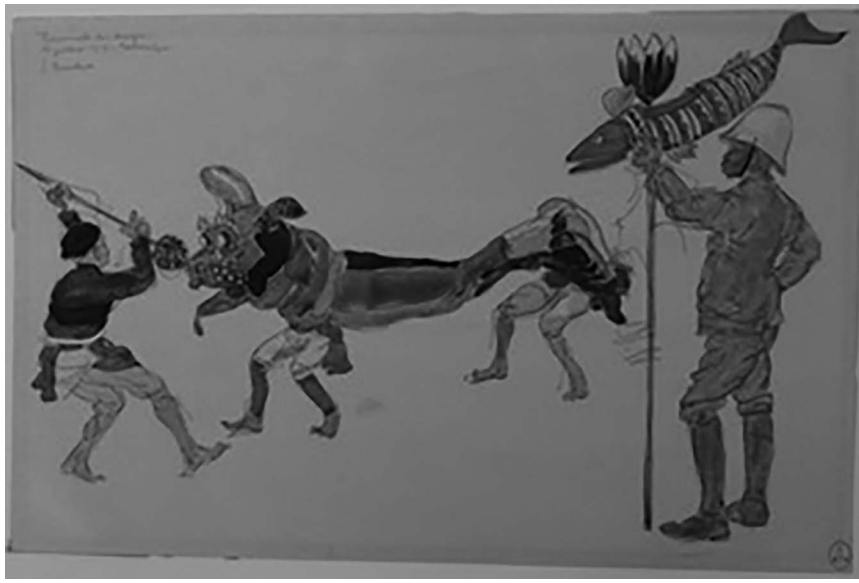

Figure 2.3 'Parading the dragon'. A Vietnamese display in Salonica, Bastille Day, 14 July 1917. Watercolour.
Source: MHC, Paris: Jacques Touchet, watercolour. By permission of La Contemporaine.

is not accidental either that the ethnographic census of the Monastir region was the work of the 11th Colonial Division, which was composed of elite French colonial regiments.

Second, there followed what we might call 'lateral encounters' between French and British colonial soldiers (the British used Indian soldiers and Egyptian labourers) who in a remote setting came across the new Macedonian subjects of the colonising endeavour. Such lateral encounters were an integral part of military expeditions to Europe's margins and were part of the global circulation of people produced by the colonial process. The sources on the subject from either side are rare but that in no way diminishes its importance. Just occasionally, a photo, drawing or passing comment lifts the veil on such encounters. Captain Schaller snapped a column of West African soldiers alongside the archaeological trophies of the AFO, a photograph of impassive observers of the civilising mission. A French war artist, Jacques Touchet, caught a Vietnamese festival in Salonika on Bastille Day, 1917, reminding us that the inhabitants of the city who seemed so exotic to the French and British soldiers experienced their own reverse exoticism as the Allied armies brought the outside world to their midst (see Figure 2.3).

* * *

In conclusion, the AFO found itself by an accident of war in a region summed up by its Second Bureau as 'neutral, suspect and occupied by us'.[15] It was indeed an occupation, since Allied military rule prevailed in this 'new Greece' which the Greek state had only acquired in 1913. And despite its accidental nature, the occupation triggered a 'civilising mission' and an ethnographic reflex embedded in colonialism, which had been fostered by military expeditions to the south and east of the continent, including the Levant, since 1798. Because these regions were significant for Europe's own civilisation, conflicts over 'patrimony' were especially sharp. At the same time, the use of colonial troops in effecting the occupation gave rise to unexpected and unscripted encounters about which we need to find out more.

Yet the Allied occupation developed no long-term goals. Indeed, because they sought Greek entry into the war, the French were attentive to the language of Greek nationhood, which they manipulated to their own ends – imperialism, if you will, rather than colonialism.[16] This resulted in alignments as well as antagonisms, as when the French officer, archaeologist and architect, Ernest Hébrard, helped invent a new Greek Salonika out of the ruins of the disastrous fire in August 1917. In this sense, French (and British) colonialism in Macedonia remained situational rather than programmatic. Both differed from the steps taken by each country to parcel out the Ottoman Middle East. They differed also from the simultaneous occupation of eastern Poland, Lithuania and Byelorussia (Ober Ost) by the German army. There, a similarly situational colonialism turned into a planned future of German settlement, cut short only by defeat in 1918. Macedonia thus takes its place in an emerging comparative study of multiple military occupations during the Great War.

Notes

1 Service Historique de la Défense (SHD) 20N 807, 'Rapport sur l'oeuvre du 227e RI en Orient, 25 décembre 1918'. The regimental commander, Colonel Saint-Hillier, signed the report.
2 See the account by a French or Francophile inhabitant of Salonika (Thomas 1918), first published as articles in the Salonika newspaper, *L'Indépendant*, on 6, 8, 10, 12, 15, 19, 22, 24, 26, 30 September, and 20 October 1918. The French subsidised this French-language publication even before the war (SHD, 20 N 77, AFO, 2e Bureau (intelligence), report of Sarrail on 'Propagande à faire dans la zone de l'Armée d'Orient', 27 April 1916).
3 Musée de l'Armée, Paris, 'Vingt-trois mois à l'Armée d'Orient (octobre 1915-septembre 1917)', album of Captain Schaller, commander of the 17th Division's artillery.
4 My thanks to Jay Winter for the suggestion.
5 SHD 20N 155, report of Captain Gibert, 2e Bureau, 24 October 1917.
6 SHD 20N 795, Dossier renseignements d'ordre géographique concernant la région de Monastir, June-July 1918.
7 SHD 20N 78, English translation of French intelligence summary no. 37, 2 January 1916, which presented the conflict around Monastir as a third Balkan War and the region as 'mainly Bulgarian by tradition and sympathy'.

8 SHD 20N 154, report of Captain Gibert, 7 June 1917, on the linguistic requirements for postal censorship. Six members of the Ecole Française d'Athènes served with the Second Bureau (Matthieu, *Des Hellénistes en guerre*).
9 The Institut d'Art et d'Archéologie, Paris, contains a Fonds Picard (H150). A number of Picard's papers have now been returned to the EFA, where they await cataloguing. They include the Korytsa report, for permission to consult which I am grateful to the Director, M. Alexandre Farnoux.
10 SHD 20N 79, 'Note de service: découvertes archéologiques ou artistiques', 21 February 1916.
11 SHD 20N 151, note of Captain Gibert, 25 October 1916.
12 Musée de Histoire Contemporaine, Paris: album photographique, 12 (army photographs of Mount Athos); Millet 1927.
13 Calculated from the figures given in the Marin report, *Journal Officiel, Documents Parlementaires, Chambre des Députés*, 1920, doc. 633, pp. 32–78. There were 475,500 indigenous soldiers out of a total of 8,317,550 (5.7%), and 71,100 dead and missing (presumed dead) out of 1,357,000, or 5.2%.
14 As an example, see Carcopino 1970. Carcopino was born in France but lectured in history at the University of Algiers and was an inspector of antiquities in the colony from 1912 to 1920. He served at Gallipoli as a Zouave (settler soldier) and transferred to the Second Bureau (military intelligence) at Salonika. He described the atmosphere in his Algerian unit as having the intimacy of a settlers' 'national guard unit'. (p. 13).
15 SHD 20N 152, Captain Gibert to Sarraut, 23 November 1916.
16 See in particular the addresses by local mayors and other officials to Sarraut as commander of the Allied Army on 14 July 1917, which uniformly used the French republican language of sovereignty and the rights of nations (SHD 20N 154).

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3 The financial mobilisation of Greece, 1914–18

Kostas Kostis

World War I, like any armed conflict, was not just a military confrontation but an economic war as well. For that matter, it would be futile to try to understand it without taking this parameter into account. In the belligerent nations, and not just them, labour and all material resources were redirected from serving the needs of civilian objectives to supporting the war effort. In this context, the success or failure of the resulting economic mobilisation played a crucial role in the outcome of the war for any given country.

In Germany, for example, preparations for a financial mobilisation in anticipation of a European conflict had started as early as the late 19th century. By 1891, Germany had already developed fiscal and monetary policies designed for the eventuality of a war which, with some modifications, became the basis for the economic mobilisation first implemented in August 1914. As is known and according to the strategic planning of that time, fiscal and monetary policies were designed to cope with a short war.

The expected duration of an imminent war is a decisive variable affecting the success of a national financial mobilisation. It is important to keep this in mind since, as one might imagine in the case of Greece, it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to follow the country's financial mobilisation during World War I in isolation from the financial mobilisation for the Balkan Wars or the Asia Minor campaign. This will become apparent later in the chapter.

Unsurprisingly, there is no indication that Greece had any financial planning in place to deal with a possible war. Nonetheless, the country was well positioned in financial terms to take part in the Balkan wars. Greece's successes in 1912 and 1913 would have been unthinkable without the excellent state of its public finances on the eve of these conflicts. The budget surpluses from 1910 and 1911, along with the balance of the 1910 loan advance and the 110 million loan of 1911 offered the Greek state significant cash reserves just when it needed them the most to meet the requirements of the upcoming military campaigns (Kostis 2003: 37ff).

Therefore, Greece was able to address the problems of financing the Balkan Wars without particular difficulties and, especially, without having to resort to the imposition of taxes. And we should not forget that these wars

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represented a colossal effort on the part of Greece at the time, with 280,000 men being mobilised to take part in a war that lasted 15 months, during a period when the country's standing army under normal circumstances numbered 80,000, a number equal to the prisoners of war that had to be fed and sheltered (Kostis 2003: 37ff; see also Tsouderos 1920: 68–71).

At the end of the Balkan Wars, the officially acknowledged cost of the military operations was estimated at 412 million drachma, approximately 16 million pounds, to which another 280 million in collateral costs should be added, while, according to Finance Minister Alexandros Diomedis, public debt had increased by 755 million drachma. The Greek state was unable to meet military spending needs on its own, all the more so as the Liberals were not willing to impose new taxes.

As a result, on 2 February 1914, the Greek government issued the first instalment of a 500 million franc loan, the largest in its history. The very favourable terms of this loan undoubtedly indicated the high expectations Western Europe held for the future of the Kingdom of Greece and were mostly owed to the stature and competence of Ioannis Valaoritis, Governor of the National Bank, who handled the negotiations.

However, rather than solving the problem of Greek public finances, this loan provided only temporary relief. The budget deficit in 1914 amounted to 170 million drachma, while the Ministry of Finance estimated that the immediate needs that had to be met and were not included in the State Budget exceeded 300 million drachma. Moreover, the second instalment of the 500 million franc loan could not be issued even before the outbreak of World War I, and as a result Greece entered the war period in dire circumstances in terms of public finances (Angelopoulos 1937: 30–1).

The fact that Greece did not enter the war right away helped things somewhat. Nonetheless, it did not solve the problems. Not even regular civil servant salaries and pensions could be paid on time, giving the opposition leverage to exercise harsh criticism. The situation deteriorated further in the second half of 1914 and the first half of 1915 when even the basic needs of the armed forces were met with difficulty and only through advances by the National Bank. The resignation of Prime Minister Eleftherios Venizelos in February 1915 came exactly at the time when Greece's fiscal shortfall reached its worst point. Moreover, the country's public finances were unlikely to improve in the near future. Quite the contrary (Figure 3.1).[1]

Thus, the return of Venizelos to power in June 1917 would take place under the worst possible circumstances. Inflation was already very high and the national division had dealt a major blow to public revenue, which further suffered from the difficulties that economic activity was experiencing due to the long-standing political uncertainty. Moreover, the swelling political passions made any decision to increase the tax burden very difficult, if not impossible. Predictably, Greece's official entry into the World War led to an explosion of public spending and deficits that domestic resources could not possibly cover.

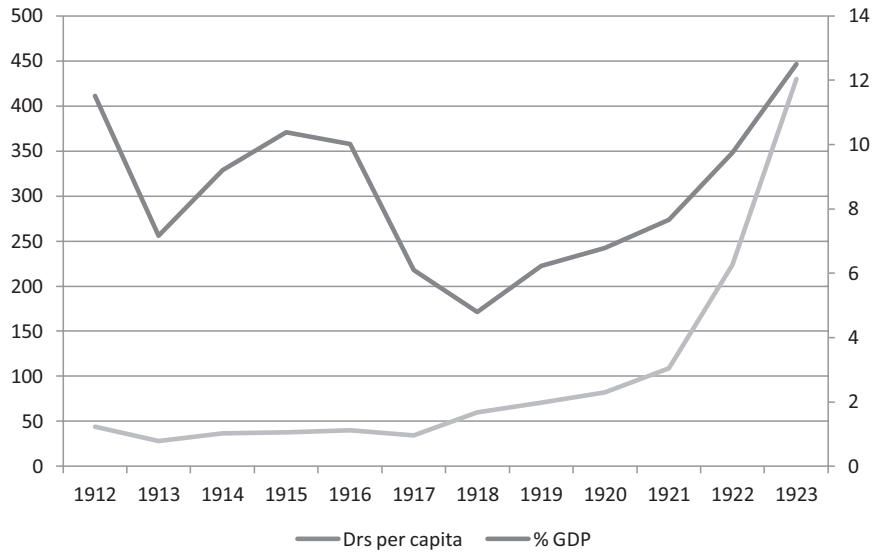

Figure 3.1 Tax burden per capita and as percentage of the Gross Domestic Product, 1912–23.
Note: Drs in the left axis, percentage in the right axis.
Source: My own calculations according to the data of Kostelenos et al. 2007 and Prontzas et al. 2011.

The economic framework within which World War I governments had to operate was characterised by the following (Figure 3.2):

1 Significant price increases, as indicated by the Consumer Price Index. With 1914 as the base year set at 100, the index reached 366 in 1918 and 1181 in 1923. To put things into perspective, one should take into account that in 1919 the index for Greece was at 323, while for the USA it was at just 180, for England at 216 and for France at 268. It should also be noted that this index did not exist during the war years, but was calculated retroactively after the end of the war, that is after 1923, which led to a search for other indicators to assess the existence of inflation and whether monetary circulation was healthy or not – to use an expression of the time.
2 The key index of that time was none other than the exchange rate. In 1914, Greece was still a member of the Latin Monetary Union and the drachma was tied to the French franc until 1915. At the beginning of that year, the franc and the pound started depreciating against the dollar, which from then on would represent the measure by which various currencies would deviate from the pre-war exchange rate system, as determined by the international gold standard. By law, the drachma was

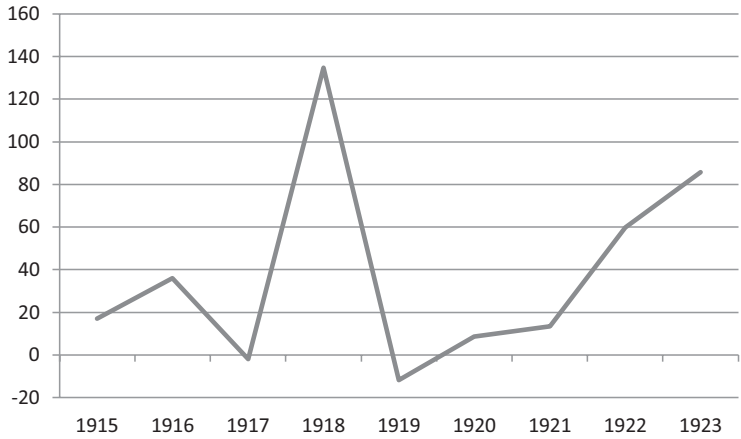

Figure 3.2 Yearly change (%) of the consumer price index, 1914–23.
Source: General Statistical Service of Greece.

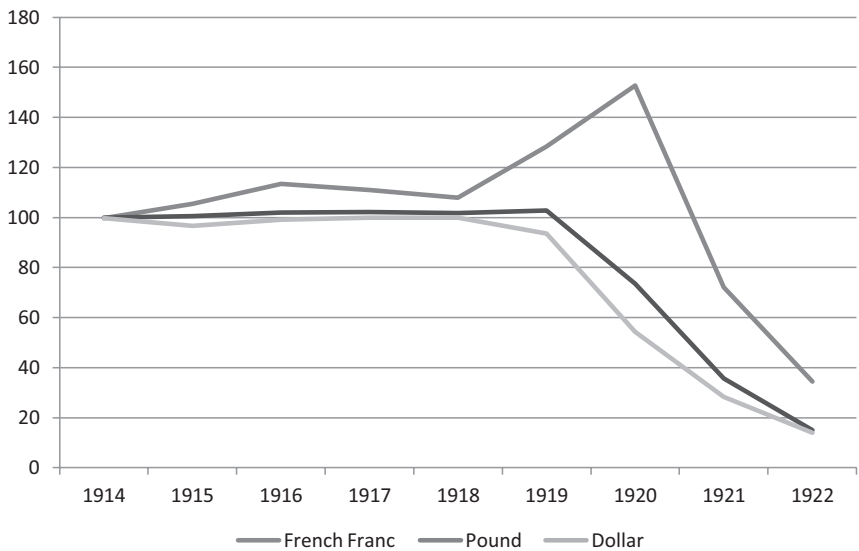

Figure 3.3 Average foreign exchange price as % of the pre-war parity.
Source: General Statistical Service of Greece.

pegged to the dollar, the only currency that retained its convertibility into gold, which from then on would represent par value. It should be noted at this point that, among the combatants, Greece's drachma was one of the few currencies that remained convertible (Figure 3.3)

Consequently, based on prevailing foreign exchange rates, the drachma retained its value throughout the war, even more so than the French franc. This occurred, of course, because on the one hand the country's foreign trade had shrunk to a great extent, while on the other the invisible balance showed a considerable surplus, mainly due to migrant remittances. For the governments of the time, however, what was important was that the drachma appeared to be a strong convertible currency, which seemed to support the objective of establishing Greece as a regional power.[2]

Nonetheless, the problem persisted: the Greek state had to find ways to finance its extraordinary expenditures. It should be borne in mind that even in the years when Greece did not take part in combat operations, military spending remained quite significant. For example, in 1914 two warships were urgently acquired from Brazil to maintain Greece's supremacy in the Aegean, at a time when Greece did not have a land border with Turkey. Also, keeping large parts of the army fully mobilised involved considerable expenditures. As a matter of fact, during the decade between 1913 and 1922, total military spending amounted to 23% of GDP, an unprecedented figure in the country's history until 1940. In comparison, military spending during the preceding decade, between 1903 and 1912, was just 8% of GDP.

Given that the International Financial Commission prohibited increases in monetary circulation – which in other countries was a standard way of covering military expenditures –, to meet its obligations the Greek state had no other option than to appeal to the issuing bank for additional loans. The low demand for debt financing by the private sector, the economy's extremely high liquidity and the very low Greek interest rates facilitated this practice, even though there was some friction, since Venizelos dismissed I. Eftaxias from the governorship of the National Bank for precisely this reason, with the state assuming the right of appointing governors from then on.[3] Nonetheless, in 1915, state loans accounted for 27.5% of the bank's assets, a percentage that would gradually decline in the following years.

Greece's entry into the Great War certainly changed things. Venizelos demanded and received aid and support so that Greece could join the war effort, but this aid was provided in a very particular manner. The Greek governments and the allied powers relied on the letter of the country's monetary system, i.e., a gold exchange standard, to finance the country's military spending. So, in 1918, Great Britain, France and the United States granted credits to Greece that could not be immediately liquidated, against which the National Bank of Greece, according to law *ΓΧΜΒ'* that determined the operation of the Greek monetary system, issued equivalent amounts of banknotes (Pantelakis 1988; see also Stragos 1928). The same system had been applied previously, in 1915, but on a smaller scale, with credits granted by France, Britain and Russia to maintain the war readiness of the Greek armed forces, and in 1916 by the Skouloudis government with credits by the German Bleichröder bank.

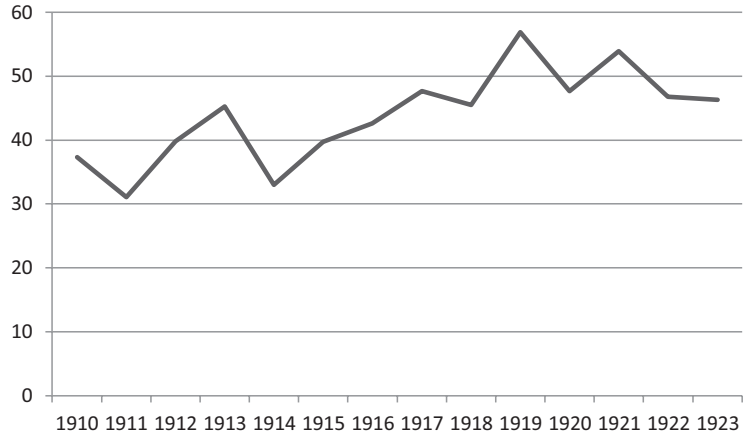

Figure 3.4 Liquidity index of the Greek economy 1910–23, M1/G.D.P. %.
Note: M1 represents monetary circulation plus sight deposits.
Source: My own calculations according to the data of Kostelenos (2007).

The large foreign exchange reserves accumulated during the war sustained the convertibility of the banknotes and maintained the drachma's par value relative to the dollar, which for the government and the NBG was a sine qua non condition for the existence of a 'healthy' currency. In fact, the sudden increase in monetary circulation exerted extremely high inflationary pressures on the Greek economy, while the potential liquidation of allied credits six months after the cessation of hostilities simply made the pursuit of an anti-inflationary policy possible, provided the use of the credits would result in the withdrawal of an equivalent amount of banknotes from circulation. Therefore, Greece too was meeting its military spending obligations through the issuance – to the extent possible at the time – of banknotes (Figure 3.4).

The end of World War I led to a sharp recovery of international trade and soon after to the abandonment of exchange pegging, that is the artificial support of the exchange rates of Allied currencies. As a result, within this new context, the Greek import trade experienced an explosive expansion, which catapulted deficits to record highs and put pressure on the drachma. Soon after, it became apparent that its devaluation, the depletion of foreign exchange reserves and the abandonment of the drachma's convertibility were inevitable and would have very serious consequences for Greek state policies.

It has been argued that a country's success in World War I can be measured by the rate of inflation recorded at its end. Germany and Austria, for example, were certainly the biggest losers, with inflation rates that destroyed their currencies. If Greece had maintained its 1919 standing, remaining on a

level with the other alliance countries, with the exception of the USA, things would not have been bad at all.

However, Greece took an extra step in the chronicle of military operations, first by taking part in the Russian intervention and then by launching the Asia Minor campaign. It would be very interesting to know what exactly Venizelos had in mind when he decided to undertake this last venture; especially how he considered financing it. We know that in October 1919, M. Negrepontis, Minister of Finance, informed him that it was impossible to find additional funds to finance public deficits and wondered how the occupation expenditures would be covered (Kostis 1984: 112). One might surmise that Venizelos was counting on the Allies' support to realise his venture, but that was highly unlikely given that their reluctance to offer aid was already apparent, with the French refusing to proceed with the liquidation of credits, as they were obliged to. Therefore, the Asia Minor campaign relied solely on domestic resources and various tricks, like the forced loan of 1922. Above all, it relied on inflation – that is the printing of money to secure financing. In this respect, the Asia Minor campaign differs considerably from the financing of both the Balkan Wars and World War I, and underscores, in economic terms, the error the undertaking of this venture represented.

Based on the available data, part of which is presented herein, if Greece had maintained its position at the end of World War I, it could have aspired to becoming a regional power, an objective it had ardently pursued. The Asia Minor venture and all that followed downgraded it to a second-tier Balkan power. Apart from this, however, taking into consideration all available economic data, Greece was among those countries that lost significant ground in the international economic hierarchy during the war period. This is evident in both absolute figures and in relative terms, that is in comparative growth rates and the process of convergence or divergence from the other countries. And all because it was decided to take one step further than what Greece could financially afford.

Notes

1 For the financing of the war effort, see Stragos (1928).
2 The best study of the monetary history of Greece during the war years is in Damiris (1920).
3 For the conflict between Venizelos and Eftaxias see Kostis (2003: 90–136).

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4 Resisting National Defence

Greek mutinies and desertions in 1916–18

George Th. Mavrogordatos

The unprecedented slaughter produced by trench warfare in World War I provoked an equally unprecedented explosion of desertions and then mutinies among the millions of conscripted soldiers. Seeking to set examples and contain this explosion by sheer terror, military authorities reacted savagely, leaving traumatic memories.

The numbers of those shot for such reasons provide an easy and ready measure for comparison. Among the major western belligerents, the worst case was Italy, most probably because it entered the war needlessly and against the wishes of its great majority – both in parliament and among the people. At least 1,000 Italian soldiers were shot either after a court-martial or without one, including the infamous practice of *decimation*, whereby among the soldiers of the offending unit one in ten was selected by lot and killed. France comes second, despite its far bigger army. Some 650 soldiers were shot (and there are only one or two attested cases of decimation). On the British side, there were some 330 executions. The differences are striking when compared with the numbers mobilised. Italy shot almost two soldiers in 10,000. The French rate was less than half of that. For the British Empire, the rate was half that of the French (Prost 2013; Sarti 2015).

Another key aspect is the *timing* of the executions. In France, most were aimed at preventing the contagion of desertions at the beginning of the war, and the numbers declined thereafter. There were 156 in 1914, in just four months (the equivalent of 468 annually); then 251 in 1915; and 121 in 1916. In 1917, the year of the mutinies, there were only 81 executions. Among the 40,000 to 80,000 mutineers, only 27 were actually shot, although collective memory has associated executions primarily with the mutinies (Bach 2014).

In this as in other respects, the Greek experience of World War I was singular. The country entered the war not only late, but also badly divided and, moreover, in two phases: first under the revolutionary Provisional Government in the autumn of 1916, then after the forced reunification of the state in June 1917, when the Entente ousted King Constantine I and installed the Venizelos government in Athens.

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Since the regular army remained loyal to Constantine, the Provisional Government was forced to create an entirely new army, named after the movement for 'National Defence' launched in Salonika in August 1916. At the beginning, this new army was largely composed of volunteers, but conscription was enforced immediately in the few territories under the control of the Provisional Government. This provoked armed local resistance on the island of Samos and, especially, in the peninsula of Halkidiki, in Central Macedonia, where it was put down with great savagery by National Defence troops. In contrast, conscription generally worked as expected in the other large Aegean islands and Crete (Genikon Epiteleion Stratou 1958: 179–84; Mavrogordatos 2015: 287–9).

Resistance to conscription did not end after the country was ostensibly reunified in 1917, under the Venizelos government and the new king Alexander, second son of Constantine. On the contrary, resistance to conscription was one of the factors which delayed the urgently awaited mobilisation of the entire army of some 300,000 men. Unlike in the other countries, where mutinies and insubordinations were desperate refusals to return to hell on the part of terrified survivors, mutineers and deserters in Greece had no previous experience of trench warfare. Mutinies and desertions on a massive scale swept the regiments of Old Greece (the pre-1912 Greek kingdom) before they even reached the Macedonian Front.

The first major mutiny erupted in January/February 1918 in the 2nd Infantry Regiment, based in the town of Lamia. It involved some 1,000 recruits and was triggered by the order of mobilisation and the expected imminent transfer to the front. This was the catalyst that actually provoked the mutiny, even if it had been prepared by a wider Constantinist conspiracy for joint action in many units of Old Greece. As it erupted, the mutiny was essentially spontaneous and leaderless, taking the form of a mere armed demonstration through the streets of Lamia (Genikon Epiteleion Stratou 1958: 295; Mavrogordatos 2015: 296–7).

From Lamia, the mutiny spread and affected a wider area, as far as Thebes, because the deserters returned to their villages, joined forces with others, captured a train, and eventually engaged in a battle with the government forces from the 9th Cretan Regiment. Repression was swift and brutal. Seven NCOs and privates were executed after a summary court-martial in Lamia. On the map, their villages form an ellipse across the surrounding district, indicating that the aim was to spread terror in the widest possible area. Another court-martial convened in Thebes, resulting in fourteen more executions among the military, including six junior officers (Genikon Epiteleion Stratou 1958: 295–6; Mavrogordatos 2015: 298–301).

Nonetheless, draft evasion and desertion persisted in Old Greece, where the mobilisation orders yielded merely 60% of the expected numbers. There were minor mutinies in Corinth and Nafplion. Desertions became massive as the troops approached the Macedonian Front. In April/May 1918 as many as 237 soldiers of the 7th Infantry Regiment mutinied and deserted

near the town of Kozani in Western Macedonia. One was killed during the pursuit, and another two were shot after a summary court-martial (Genikon Epiteleion Stratou 1958: 298–9).

The last major mutiny broke out in June 1918 in the 12th Infantry Regiment at Servia, also near Kozani. The regiment effectively disbanded as 800 of its soldiers deserted and fled, seeking to return to their towns and villages in Old Greece (specifically Achaea and Elis in the Peloponnese). They were pursued across the country for several days until they were caught and court-martialed. Perhaps as many as 85 death sentences were carried out, including five officers. The colonel himself who had commanded the regiment was tried and shot for his inaction (Genikon Epiteleion Stratou 1961: 50–3; Mavrogordatos, 2015: 303–4).

* * *

Apart from the fear of death or permanent injury in atrocious conditions, especially by poison gas, desertions and especially mutinies in other countries were influenced and legitimated, to some extent, by pacifism and antimilitarism, mostly of socialist or anarchist inspiration. The exact reverse was true in Greece – Old Greece to be more precise. Ostensible and ostentatious militarism had been the prevailing spirit. Ironically, the refusal to fight was presented and legitimated as strict military obedience to King Constantine I – the commander-in-chief.

The origins of this peculiar situation are to be found in the Balkan Wars of 1912–13, when the Greek army was victorious under the command of Constantine. In September 1915 the army was mobilised again, and spent ten months in inaction, subjected to royalist propaganda. When it was formally demobilised in June 1916 at the behest of the Entente, it was transmogrified into a proto-fascist paramilitary mass movement of Reservists, which became a true state within the state and terrorised the opponents of Constantine. In their extravagant statements, the Reservists worshipped him as their commander-in-chief, recalled their common glorious past, and declared themselves ready to fight again 'only when You and only You' give the order (Mavrogordatos 1996: 55).

But the order never came. On the contrary, in 1918 draft evasion, desertion, and mutiny appeared justified as serving Constantine, who had been exiled by the Entente. The Venizelists had imagined that the reunification of the state and the removal of Constantine would normalise the internal political situation to the benefit of a nationwide war effort. In this they were proven completely wrong. On the contrary, his absence freed in one stroke the most fanatical or most naïve among his faithful from reservations and limitations that might have restrained them if he were present and could be held personally responsible. The Constantinists were now ready to commit for the sake of their erstwhile commander-in-chief the most serious and shameful military crimes, like mutiny, desertion, or even collaboration

with the enemy. Deep underneath one may find completely normal motives: self-preservation and the refusal to fight. Loyalty to the glorious commander-in-chief offered a bombastic alibi to such inglorious and unavowed selfishness. Consequently, loyalty to Constantine also became a favourite theme of German propaganda flyers seeking to undermine the morale of Greek soldiers on the Macedonian Front, and to induce desertions or even defections among them.

For his part, Venizelos accurately captured the significance of the mutiny in Lamia when he said that 'what is sought is on the one hand to make Greece incapable of victory, on the other hand to facilitate the victory of her hereditary enemies [Bulgaria and Turkey] on the monstrous hope that such a disaster for Greece may lead to the restoration of the deposed king' (Mavrogordatos 2015: 299).

It is telling that the young king Alexander, who was expected by his father to sabotage the war effort, eventually freed himself from the paternal dictates exactly when the mutiny in Lamia occurred. On his way to the Macedonian Front, King Alexander stopped in Lamia and spoke to the assembled troops precisely on the day when the court-martial issued the first two death sentences. In what was perhaps his own text, he stated emphatically: 'Not only he that places obstacles to this struggle is a traitor, but also he who simply gets the idea to mutiny is a traitor' (Mavrogordatos 2015: 299).

Whether the patriotic stance of King Alexander actually influenced those viscerally faithful to his father can only be conjectured. Diametrically opposed was the republicanism inspiring the early enthusiasm among volunteers and conscripts for the army of National Defence. This is captured, for example, by Stratis Myrivilis in his *Life in the Tomb*, the foremost Greek novel to come out of the Macedonian Front. Writing about his native Lesbos and his personal emotional involvement, he exclaims (in the original version of the novel): 'A Revolution. Let's fight one more time. Let's liberate the remaining brothers. Let's overthrow the King as well! Ah, this!' (Myrivilis 1991: 15).

* * *

Although the origin of desertions and mutinies was entirely different in Greece, their repression on the part of the Venizelos government seems to have simply imitated the French model. After all, the Greek officers were most familiar with the French army, which, moreover, was the dominant presence in Greece at the time.

The elaborate French ritual of military degradation became known worldwide from its disgraceful application to Captain Alfred Dreyfus in 1895. In the midst of a square formed by troops, the condemned was first read his sentence, then stripped of his rank insignia, badges and buttons, and eventually paraded or dragged in front of the troops.

Executions were also elaborately staged spectacles in front of the assembled troops. Firing squads were composed entirely or at least in part by comrades of the condemned. In Lamia, for instance, the firing squads were mixed: they included soldiers from the offending 2nd Infantry Regiment and soldiers from the 9th Cretan Regiment which had quelled the mutiny. In effect, the Cretan outsiders made sure that the local boys shot their own comrades and fellow villagers. This forced sharing of guilt for the killings was a refinement which appears to have been developed on the Western Front.

Both the degradation and the execution were proven instruments of terror to restore military discipline, as in France. The aim was extremely simple: to reverse the direction of self-preservation and make the probability of an honourable death preferable to the certainty of a dishonourable one. 'Whoever does not want to face death on the glorious field of honour shall face it on the field of dishonour!' (Mavrogordatos 2015: 302). This is how a notorious prosecutor of the Venizelist courts-martial defined the dilemma, when he harangued the firing squad after the first executions in Kozani, in June 1918.

These took place before not only the assembled troops, but also the local civil and military authorities, as well as a huge crowd of civilian onlookers. At the end, both soldiers and civilians shouted 'Hurrah for the War!' This was not entirely idle shouting. It reflected the prevailing spirit among the Venizelists. One month earlier, the National Defence Army Corps had won a great victory at Skra di Legen on the Macedonian Front against the Bulgarians, at enormous cost in casualties. Its three divisions represented areas outside Old Greece (the Aegean Archipelago, Crete, and Eastern Macedonia) and had been fighting for more than a year already. Evidently, their bravery, their sacrifice, and their victory were not sufficient to inspire conscripts from Old Greece, as the mutiny of the 12th Infantry Regiment was to show less than a month later.

The Greek experience may be compared to the French precedent in 1914–15, insofar as it involved the very first months of mobilisation. It may also be compared to the Italian case, insofar as it involved populations refusing the war. According to incomplete data provided by the minister of war Nikolaos Theotokis in May 1921, those court-martialed and shot in 1917–20 were 140 (Mavrogordatos 2015: 308). If we take this figure and compare it to the 300,000 potential recruits of the Greek army, it emerges that the Greek rate of such executions was more than four in 10,000 – in other words more than twice the Italian record rate. This, however, was the result of a civil war rather than of the Great War itself.

* * *

The uniqueness of the Greek experience was manifested also in the aftermath. In other countries, it is only recently that the wholesale rehabilitation of the soldiers executed for desertion or mutiny during World War I became an irresistible demand, with the approach of the war's centenary.

Such rehabilitation was achieved first in New Zealand, Canada, and the UK, followed by France and Italy, though only partly (Prost 2013). Not so in Greece, however: those shot had been rehabilitated already in 1921–22, as 'victims of Venizelist tyranny'.

As soon as they returned to power after the election of November 1920, the immediate concern and top priority of the Antivenizelists was the rehabilitation and compensation of all the 'victims of tyranny'. Discussions to that effect continued intermittently throughout the short life of the so-called 3rd National Assembly. For those shot, compensation included war pensions to their families and the exemption of sons and brothers from front duty. To the extent that they had been shot for refusing to fight, it seemed fair, apparently, for their closest relatives to benefit in their stead. In what was to be its very last session, in July 1922, the Assembly even voted the erection of monuments wherever those 'shot by the Venizelist tyranny' had been buried 'like dogs' (Mavrogordatos 2015: 308–9).

Just three months later, the matter cropped up during the trial that was to result in the execution of the Six (five politicians and the last commander-in-chief) held responsible for the Asia Minor Disaster. One of the prosecutors was Colonel Neokosmos Grigoriadis, who was among the very first Greek officers to fight on the Macedonian Front, as a captain commanding the 1st National Defence Battalion from September 1916. Referring to the numbers of death sentences and executions provided in May 1921 by the defendant Nikolaos Theotokis, then minister of war, Grigoriadis observed acidly that Theotokis had failed to say that those 'accursed traitors' had been shot in the wake of five mutinies. Also, these numbers included Greek bandits, Turkish brigands and Bulgarian *komitadjis*. The 'culmination of insolence' had been the parliamentary resolution to erect monuments for these 'scoundrels' (Mavrogordatos 2015: 309–10).

What was particularly galling for the Venizelists was the rehabilitation and reinstatement of officers who had actually defected to the Bulgarians. In the trial of the Six, it transpired that two such captains had been serving in Asia Minor. Theotokis' lawyer spoke of them merely as 'two unfortunate Greek officers who defected to the Bulgarians and had been sentenced to death' (Mavrogordatos 2015: 310). Unfortunate? Why unfortunate? Was this the right word?

A decade later, in his hagiography of King Constantine, a retired general was to write of the mutinies of 1918 as 'youthful and innocuous micro-rebellions' (Ioannidis 1935: 432). It was not until 1958–61 that the mutinies and desertions found their proper place in the volumes of official military history.

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5 The second Great War, 1917–23

Jay Winter

In this chapter, I would like to present a bifurcated interpretation of the history of the Great War, dividing it into two parts, the first lasting from 1914 to 1917, the second continuing from 1917 to 1923. In this way, I want to take advantage of developments in historiography in which two major changes have occurred in recent years: first, a shift of the geographical epicentre of the war from Paris to Warsaw, and secondly, a shift in the chronology of the war recognizing its failure to end in 1918.

The interpretation I offer suggests that there was a crisis in 1917, which separates the first three years of the conflict from the years that followed, and was largely the result of powerful economic and demographic pressures which destabilized all the combatants, but more so the Central powers than the Allies. This crisis abated somewhat in the west in 1918, but continued in an exacerbated form for the following five years. Hatred, hunger and class conflict were radicalizing elements in the disorder of the post-imperial world, set adrift by the collapse of the Romanoff, Hohenzollern, Habsburg and Ottoman empires. Post-imperial violence was endemic in these regions, merging civil war, ethnic conflicts and national conflicts which played out in this, the second Great War. The passage from wartime crisis to post-imperial violence was seamless, and part of one complex but distinctive phase of European history, starting in 1917 and terminating more or less in 1923.

From one war to another

The illusion that the Great War ended on 11 November 1918 grew out of a Western-front myopia about the war, which I for one shared for all too long. Thirty years ago I argued that among the many reasons for the war in 1914, one was that Britain and Germany were prepared to engage in armed conflict over control of north-western Europe. Britain could not allow a German victory over France, which would place the German navy in occupation of the Channel ports and thereby in control of British trade routes that provided 75% of the British food supply in 1914. That war, won by France, Britain and their allies, ended in 1918, and the Peace Treaty of 1919 put a seal on that victory, which lasted until Hitler's rewriting of 1918 in 1940.

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But all the other theatres of the Great War were left in a state of chaos and uncertainty made more threatening by the potential spread of the Russian Revolution throughout Europe. Who can claim that the period 1919–23 was one of peace? Various white armies, supported by a mismanaged military expedition of the victorious Allies, tried and failed to overthrow the Bolshevik regime. Civil war in Russia left only calamity in its wake, as did the Red thrust into Poland and its defeat not far from the gates of Warsaw. Italy lost the peace and her parliamentary regime collapsed, with a little help from Mussolini and King Victor Emmanuel. The states created out of the Austro-Hungarian empire were riven by class conflict and ethnic conflict, which overlapped in ways which made sure that the bloodshed would continue for a considerable period of time. And the collapse of the Ottoman empire produced anything but peace. In the aftermath of the first treaty with the Ottoman empire, namely the treaty of Sèvres, elements of the defeated Ottoman army, reassembled by Mustafa Kemal, re-conquered their own soil, against Greek, British, French and Italian forces which had occupied Anatolia after November 1918.

In effect, war bled into civil war, which transformed the face of Central, Southern and Eastern Europe. One inevitable result of this shift of emphasis in violence from international to internecine was ethnic cleansing. One of the most terrifying instances of demographic displacement occurred in Turkey, where Christians by the millions moved west, from Anatolia to Europe and Eastern Thrace, and Muslims moved east, from Europe to what became in 1923 the Turkish Republic. When the Treaty of Sèvres was scrapped and replaced by the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923, that process of the Turkification of the new nation was codified in international law. What had started in the Armenian genocide of 1915 was completed on the shores of Smyrna, much of which was burnt to the ground in 1922. Christian Smyrna vanished; Muslim Izmir rose in its place. The euphemism of population exchange was coined to cover the nakedness of murder, rape and pillage.

So my claim is twofold. We must change the chronological parameters of the war that began in 1914. But we must also register a change in the character of collective violence in the subsequent decade. My argument is that there was a fundamental difference in the way war was waged in 1914–17 compared to 1917–24.

What separates these two phases was that prior to 1917, war mobilization entailed the forced unification of social classes and ethnic groups behind the war effort. To be sure, this effort succeeded in a muffling or masking of internal conflicts in order to provide the armies with the men and materiel needed for victory. After 1917, internal conflicts re-emerged, perhaps with added force because of their suppression over a period of three years, and turned a culture of war mobilization on both sides into a culture of war anxiety. The first aimed at unity; the second focused on internal divisions, hatreds and resentments, some of long standing, some just invented.

In effect in early 1917, all combatants faced the emergence of a second war culture different from the culture of war mobilization of the first 20 months of the war. Alongside *l'Union sacrée* the suspension of partisan politics was a host of fractures, in which the suspicion or worse of one's fellow countrymen provided the basis for attacks, rhetorical or physical, which had focused, in the first part of the war, on the foreign enemy. Now the enemy lived within, and posed a threat to the nation and the war effort. This was as true of Irishmen in revolt against Britain in 1916, as it was of Jews in Imperial Germany, whose supposedly low levels of military participation became the subject of a botched army Census which wound up proving the opposite. Jews were disproportionately present at the front. The Jew Census was quickly shelved, the archives destroyed, but the sentiments behind it festered.

On the Ides of March 1917, with the abdication of Tsar Nicholas II, the old order on both sides faced a new menace: the prospect of social unrest leading to revolution and civil war. The spectre of trans-national class conflict intersecting with global military conflict, justifies our sense of rupture in the midst of the Great War. That threat fed the new culture of war anxiety, which emerged as the material and human toll the conflict exacted spiralled to unprecedented levels. What requires us to divide the war into two parts is this rupture, this sense that the bitterness felt about domestic traitors grew from early 1917 onwards and deepened ominously after the Armistice of November 1918. The politics of *domestic* division and hatred dominated political, economic, and social life for years thereafter.

This difference between imperial and revolutionary perspectives was made blindingly explicit when, on 23 November 1917, the new Bolshevik regime in Russia published verbatim in *Pravda* documents from the Tsar's Foreign Ministry, producing undeniable evidence of the imperial future the Allies had in mind. These imperial ambitions became problematic when the United States entered the war in April 1917. President Wilson's commitment to open diplomacy and the principle of national self-determination cut right across the imperial outlook and designs of the other belligerents. If tens of millions of men had suffered and died on both sides so that imperial power could change hands, then those betraying these nations at war were the liars and hypocrites in power.

Multiple social divisions re-emerged in a deepened form, in this, the first phase of the second Great War, and on both sides. Independently of the Russian revolution, domestic conflict broke out in industry. After three years of industrial mobilization, the first stage of a series of massive strike-waves spread through Europe. These strike waves lasted until roughly 1923.

The phenomenon was both war-related in the way it reflected wartime inflation and inequality of sacrifice, and also followed secular trends. Since the 1880s, moments of major trade union growth were often followed by strike activity. The year 1917 presented no exception; there had been a massive

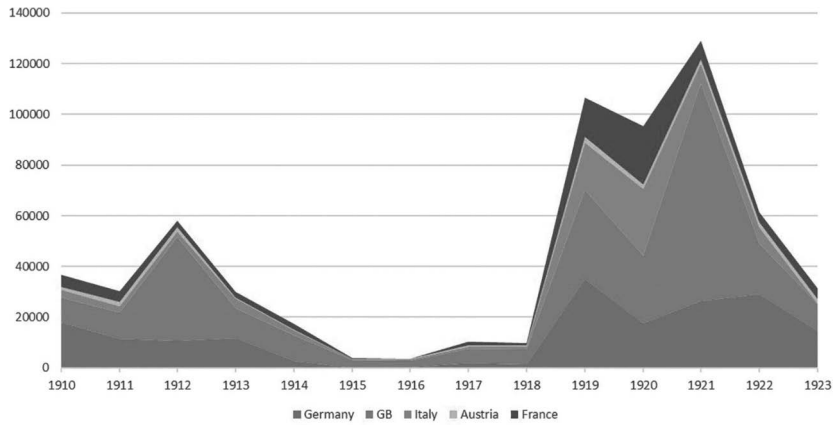

Figure 5.1 The International Strike Wave 1918–23 (Man-Days lost 000s).

influx into trade unions in all combatant countries after 1914. Furthermore, the intensity of the strikes in 1917 and after suggested that the postponement of workers' demands on wages and conditions of labour, which had occurred in all belligerent countries and some neutral ones since 1914, acted like the lid of a pressure cooker. Inflation fuelled the fire, and trade unions and other social groups, in particular women protesting shortages and outrageous food and fuel prices, took to the streets or downed tools. They did so despite understanding the desperate needs of the war machine (Tilly 1989; Haimson and Sapelli 1992). Indeed, the March revolution in Russia was triggered by a women's protest over bread prices (Figure 5.1).

Furthermore, in 1917, the domestic political truce of the first half of the war came to an end. The German Social Democratic Party split in early 1917. Those wanting an end to the war met at Gotha on 6 April and founded the Independent Social Democratic Party (USPD). Once again, women's groups were prominent in this radicalization of the political left. The British Liberal Party split, in part over personalities, in part over conscription and the suppression of the 1916 rising in Ireland. In France, Georges Clemenceau, who became Prime Minister in November, was a divisive leader. He had his Radical colleague Joseph Caillaux arrested for advocating peace negotiations: Caillaux was convicted of treason in 1918 (Gomez-Brufa 2014).

Polarization marked the advent of the increasingly strident political right as well. When the German Reichstag issued its peace resolution in July 1917, disgruntled deputies and their supporters set up the Vaterlandspartei (Fatherland party), with the notable support of Admiral von Tirpitz and the industrialist Alfred Hugenberg (Bessel 2002). By then, the German war effort was almost entirely in the hands of a military industrial group that gave the army whatever it needed, but at the price of creating massive bottlenecks

and shortages on the home front. Social protest intensified just as economic difficulties multiplied.

For the French, the war crisis of 1917 antedated the Chemin des Dames offensive and the mutinies which followed its failure. There is no evidence that social agitation on France's home front influenced these mutinous soldiers, who refused to continue the futile and bloody offensive launched by General Nivelle on 16 April (Loez and Mariot 2008). Instead, both the mutiny and the existence of widespread unrest on the home front reflected the exhaustion and anger felt by most French citizens.

To them, as to many around the world, the war appeared to be endless. The war of 1914–17 had produced a massive stalemate. Neither side had a sufficient advantage to bring the warring parties to the conference table. And in 30 months of war, the two sides had lost perhaps 8 million men killed in action or dead of wounds, and another 20 million wounded or prisoners of war. The giant campaigns of 1916, which we today call the battles of Verdun and the Somme, had not changed by one iota the strategic balance on the Western Front. Fatigue, anger, suspicion and social friction were evident everywhere.

The strength of the 'imperial' war cultures of the 1914–17 period was that they were dominated by compelling representations of war as a fight to preserve old and valued ways of life (Audoin-Rouzeau and Becker 2000). The new 'revolutionary' war cultures of the 1917-and-after period were marked by anger and a sense of domestic injustice, as well as more than a touch of what Nietzsche termed *ressentiment* or festering bitterness (Ferro 2007). But they also harboured hopes of positive transformations, in the hope that something good would come out of the immense suffering of the conflict.

The two forms of violence – imperial war and revolutionary war – were both in play from 1917 on. Given the military stalemate, it is hardly surprising that we can see the incomplete but striking emergence of what I term a culture of war anxiety, different in some important ways from the war cultures of 1914–17.

If I have persuaded you that the Great War fractured in 1917, then it still remains for me to persuade you that the new culture of war anxiety, with its emphasis on the enemy within, informed and reflected collective violence in Europe, in particular in Central, Southern, and Eastern Europe, for years after the Armistice. If so, then it follows that the second Great War may be dated from 1917 to 1923.

Post-imperial violence

Violence against civilians

The end of the war in 1918 meant the beginning of a number of wars to determine the borders of post-imperial Eastern Europe. Much of this violence

Figure 5.2 The destroyed Hassidic synagogue in Lviv, after the pogrom of 22 November 1918.
Source: Lviv Center for Urban History.

was directed at civilians. When the nascent Polish army defeated Ukrainians and captured the Galician city of Lvov, there followed on 22–24 November an attack on Jews and Jewish property in the city. Approximately, 150 Jews were killed and 500 shops destroyed (Figure 5.2).

The Pilsudski-Paderewski government condemned the attacks, which they ascribed to bandits and others driven to violence by hardships and hunger. One source of anger was the perceived difference between Jewish wealth and Polish poverty, so configured that the Jews symbolically or materially 'owed' their Polish attackers the goods (and lives) they took. Here is evidence of the breakdown of law and order in the aftermath of the Armistice, and the spill-over of wartime hatreds into post-war violence directed against a Jewish minority whose 'neutrality' between Ukrainians and Poles they saw as a smokescreen for betrayal. Violence, including murder, thus informed a kind of retributive justice in the eyes of the perpetrators (Hagen 2005).

There is substantial evidence of the unleashing of violence on ethnic, class or national enemies throughout Eastern Europe, both before and after the Armistice. One case is now known as the Finnish civil war. It started in February 1918, with an offensive by armed groups supported by the new Bolshevik regime. Against them conservative forces were backed by the German army, whose military detachments were in Finland. Battles for Tampere and Helsinki were won by the White Guard and German forces. Plans to

establish a German-backed monarchy in Finland were dashed only by the November defeat of Germany. What made this encounter significant was the use of terror not only during the fighting, but in its aftermath. Perhaps 12,500 Red Guards died in captivity at the hands of the Whites. Here is one case among many to suggest that when national wars turned into civil wars, the limits on the maltreatment both of civilians and of those in uniform, whether prisoners or not, disappeared.

The civil war in the Baltic states showed the same resort to indiscriminate violence. On 1 December 1918, Latvian territory was invaded by Bolshevik forces. Riga fell to them on 3 January 1919. Thereafter an unstable alliance of Latvian and Estonian forces, alongside elements of German para-military groups pushed back, first against the Bolsheviks, and then against each other. German forces captured Riga on 22 May, but then refused to leave. They had their own agenda to create a German presence in the Baltic states. This mad idea – mad in the context of a lost war – vanished when they were expelled by their erstwhile allies in the combined Latvian and Estonian forces. Further fighting established Latvian independence, ratified by the Latvian-Soviet Treaty of 1920.

What happened in the Baltic states was a microcosm of the civil war, anarchy and brigandage that raged across Soviet Russia from 1917 to 1922. What was different in this post-war wave of violence? Firstly, these internecine conflicts were exercises in butchery and pillage under conditions of hunger turning into famine. And secondly, the civil war was deformed by the presence, albeit in relatively small numbers, of Western troops who initially took Bolshevik Russia's withdrawal from the conflict as treachery, and who were determined to reassert Western interests in Russia by the overthrow of the Bolshevik regime itself. Their failure and that of their many allies in the White armies to do so was as decisive in ending the second Great War, as the Bolshevik revolution was in ending the first Great War in 1917.

The extent to which civilians were caught up in the cross-fire made the first Great War in most respects look relatively polite and orderly. A taste of the cruelties of these civil wars may be gained by a perusal of Anna Akhmatova's poetry, Isaac Babel's *Red Cavalry* or Pasternak's *Dr Zhivago.*

The exception to this distinction between before and after 1917 is the Armenian genocide. That crime provides the bridge between the first Great War and the second since it announced a policy of war against a people not for what they were said to have done – supported the Russian war effort – but for who they were. After 1917, the violence of civil war was primarily directed at civilians, neighbours, the enemy within.

Hunger and famine

The second Great War, stretching from 1917 to 1923, also resembles the first Great War with respect to hunger, but what was miserable in 1914–17 became disastrous thereafter. Food shortages and the lack of basic necessities

crippled the war effort of Germany and Austria-Hungary in 1917, just as they did in many parts of the Russian and Ottoman empires. Indeed, these shortages were built into the way the war was waged within the Central powers. Among the Allies, it was possible to distribute goods and services needed by the armed forces without consigning your own people to hunger and disease. Here again, there was in 1915 a foretaste of the problem of food shortages which spread throughout Eastern Europe from 1917 on. In the last two years of the war, hunger was a major factor in exposing the fundamental weakness in the Central Powers' way of waging war. And the matter was less supply than distribution. The Allies controlled prices and profits, while in Germany the worst price inflation in world history began in 1917 and abated only in 1923. Inflation destroyed savings, crippled markets and distribution networks, empowered a massive black market, and exacerbated internecine hatreds.

Worse was to come after the Armistice. Virtually all the grain-producing areas were sites of ongoing violence, and the power vacuum produced by the Armistice meant that 1919 was going to be a year of hunger for the bulk of the population living in the east and in the new Bolshevik Russia, assailed on all sides by counter-revolutionary bands and armies.

The Allies made things worse – in clear violation of international law – by continuing the blockade of German ports until the German delegation signed the Peace Treaty in June 1919. That meant hunger and soaring death rates in Vienna and Berlin, but also in the densely populated areas of the new Poland and adjacent territories. A demographic crisis followed, with outbreaks of typhus, dysentery and cholera exacerbated by the worst influenza pandemic in world history.

In 1919, the US Congress established the American Relief Administration. In the following four years, it provided food aid to 23 European countries and to Turkey and the remains of the Ottoman empire. One-fifth of their aid went to Poland, feeding Polish schoolchildren and probably feeding Polish soldiers in the Polish-Soviet war.

In 1921, famine of potentially catastrophic proportions impelled the Bolshevik government to work with the Hoover Food Aid program. It worked because Hoover realized that while agricultural production was crippled by war and civil war, the real problem of avoiding famine was the need to provide transportation through a chaotic and strife-torn rural landscape. That he did, using his expertise as a civil engineer with knowledge of the Russian terrain. He was not alone. There were many other European and local agents who made a difference. Together, they were able to save the lives of a generation of children in Russia, Ukraine and Byelorussia.

No one has been able to provide a demographic accounting of the loss of life which took place during the Russian civil war and the Polish-Soviet War. Demographer Boris Urlanis claimed that the figure of 300,000 was the best available for those who died in combat in the Polish-Soviet war; perhaps 175,000 of these deaths were suffered by the White armies and civilians;

125,000 by the Red armies. But ominously, he added a figure of 450,000 on both sides who died of disease. No one knows how many perished in the White and Red Terror in Russia, or in the countless skirmishes that marked the conflict. Caution suggests that we accept that the total number who died of disease, combat or execution exceeded one million between 1917 and 1921. These losses crippled the new regime. The industrial working class, in whose name the Revolutions of 1917 were launched, virtually had disappeared five years later. The Soviet state took the place of this vanished class, and then, once in power, Stalin and his henchmen waged war on his own people for nearly 30 years (Figes 1996).

Conclusion

I am not one of those historians who believe in the concept of the Thirty Years' War, from 1914 to 1945. Hitler changed the meaning of war in 1939 in Poland and in 1941 when he invaded the Soviet Union and turned war as politics into war as racial extermination. But one of the advantages of the notion that there were two Great Wars between 1914 and 1923 is that it provides us with clues as to what led from the First World War to the Second. The politics of hatred, of hunger, and of the maltreatment of civilians can be traced directly to what I call the first Great War of 1914–17. But these vectors of violence were profoundly deepened and radicalized during the second Great War of 1917–23. Anti-Semitism was alive and well before these dates, but it grew by leaps and bounds in 1918 and after (Gerwarth 2016). The viciousness of the confused fighting among different armies representing different national factions and ethnic groups only worsened when these conflicts were fused (and confused) with the Russian civil war.

It was in the period 1918–23 that we can find abundant evidence of the process historian George Mosse terms brutalization. He used it in a different sense than I use it today. He believed that exposure to mass death in 1914–18 brutalized both the men who endured it and the societies for which they fought. I believe he is mistaken on this point. The shocking effects of the great battles of Verdun and the Somme can never be underestimated, but the overwhelming majority of the men who fought them returned either to combat or to their homes as recognizable human beings, with their commitments and values more or less intact. No, Mosse (1990) is wrong about the date but right on the essence of the story. The evidence supporting the argument that there was a brutalization of norms – much more damaging than the brutalization of individuals – can be found in abundance in the period 1917–23 and after. Then economic and demographic disasters hit societies in a state of disorder and weakness that simply did not exist on the eve of World War I. The year 1913 was a good one ; 1919 was a terrible one. After 1918, civil wars and wars of national independence were fought out against the backdrop of famine, class conflict and ethnic hatreds not unknown before 1918, but now mixed together in a new and deadly witches' brew.

It is not in the first Great War of 1914–17, but in this second Great War of 1917–24, that the seeds of the radical conflicts of the 1930s must be sought. The German army in 1914–17 was in no sense a prototype of the Nazi armies under Hitler. But when Ludendorff and Hindenburg took it over in late 1916, they started a transition which slowly but surely prepared the way for the dark future ahead. The same is true for Russia. Civil war turned a regime with many facets, including both liberal and lethal ones, into a monster. Without Italy's diplomatic failures in Paris in 1919, and the parallel intensification of class conflict in the immediate aftermath of the war, Mussolini had no chance of seizing power.

Contingency matters. And the contingent processes that won out in the second Great War were hardly democratic. Despite a period of recovery in the later 1920s, the world economic crisis exposed the authoritarian political tendencies feeding off the profound social and ethnic divisions which remained the ultimate legacy of the second Great War.

In sum, the tragic dimension of the Great War was evident well before 1917. But until now, historians of 1917 have emphasized the theme of remobilization as marking the renewal of the commitment of home populations to the even greater sacrifices required of them three years after the outbreak of the war (Horne 2017). There is truth in this argument, but it makes more sense to tell a more complicated story, and to suggest that after three years of war, there was a shift away from images of mobilization of whole societies to images of social fissures within them. What I term 'the culture of war anxiety' highlighted a sense of anger about injustice and privilege, which cut right across the *union sacrée* of the first part of the conflict. The emergence of this competing war culture, one of resentment rather than of rallying around the flag, constituted a significant development in the cultural history of Europe.

In 1917 and after, the culture of war anxiety did not so much displace the culture of war mobilization as challenge and destabilize it. Most contemporaries still yearned for victory, but not at any price. This was the most disturbing message of the Bolshevik revolution, one which haunted all combatants in the last year of the war.

It makes sense to see the culture of war anxiety and the culture of postwar anxiety as a continuum. To do so helps us to go beyond purely legalistic definitions as to what constitutes the end date of the war. The conventional dates arising from the peace treaties have their uses, but only as points of legal demarcation. There had been too much bloodshed and too much bitterness to enable societies to close the door on the hatreds, antagonisms and anxieties of military conflict. In effect, wartime bled into what until now we have called peacetime.

Why did this paroxysm of violence between 1917 and 1923 come to an end? One reason is sheer exhaustion. There was a limit to the capacity of these societies to endure endless violence. Broadly speaking, by the end of 1923, the economic chaos of the previous six years came to an end, and

most European countries in both the east and the west renewed their pre-war growth trajectories which had been interrupted by the war (Broadberry and Klein 2017). Another reason for the end of the second Great War was the recognition on the part of the Western powers that the Soviet Union was here to stay. A third was the slow but steady reincorporation of Weimar Germany into the European community and the League of Nations. Of course, after 1929, none of the stability conditions which had made European recovery possible survived the world economic crisis, but that is another story.

It is time, therefore, to reconsider the terminal dates of the Great War. I stick to 1914 as its opening, not because I underestimate the significance of the Balkan wars of 1912 and 1913, but because they did not trigger a global conflict. Neither did the Russo-Japanese war of 1904–5, which could also be said to have set in motion forces which spanned the century. The war crisis of 1914 led to the global war none of these earlier crises precipitated.

In my interpretation, the two 'Great Wars' span the period from 1914 to 1923. The dividing point came in 1917, when revolution and social conflict returned to the centre of the European stage and when all societies confronted significant social divisions within them. By 1917, new representations of war shot through with anxiety and hatred of domestic enemies emerged alongside older representations of heroic solidarity. Those anxieties did not evaporate in 1918: they took on new and at times even more violent forms, arising in the context of civil wars, wars of national independence and revolution.

To recognize that the Great War did not end in 1918 is the only way to do justice to its revolutionary character and to shift the centre of gravity of the war from Paris to Warsaw, from London to St Petersburg. These three moves – chronological, analytical and geographical – are the prerequisites for what we do not yet have – a truly European history of the conflict. That task remains to be done.

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Part II

On and behind the front line

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6 Cameras with the British Salonika Force, 1915–18

Alan Wakefield

World War I was the first conflict to be extensively photographed; its outbreak coincided with the rise of photography as a popular pastime. Technical developments pioneered by George Eastman's Kodak Company gave the public access to affordable, lightweight, robust, reliable cameras using roll film. Such cameras, including the market leading Vest Pocket Kodak (VPK), folded to fit neatly into a jacket pocket. In Britain, competition with Kodak came from manufacturers such as Houghton's with their all-metal, folding Ensignette camera. The cost of such equipment was not prohibitive, and with Kodak and other companies offering photographic development services, the amateur photographer had no need to master the skills of the darkroom (Figure 6.1).

The growing mass market for camera equipment meant that, with the coming of war in 1914, a significant number of soldiers had cameras with which to document their war experiences. Manufacturers lost little time in marketing their cameras to the massed ranks of men from Britain and her

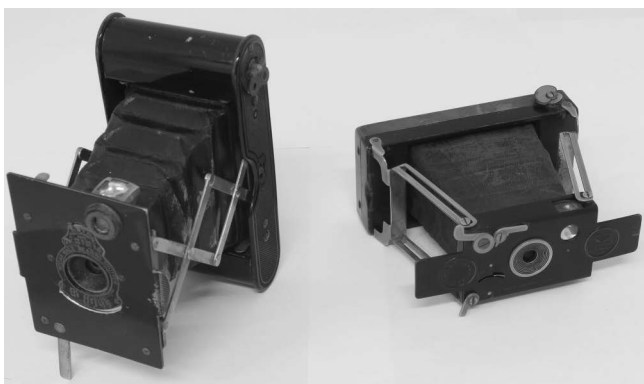

Figure 6.1 The Vest Pocket Kodak (VPK) and a Houghton's Ensignette; two cameras popular with British soldier photographers during World War I.
Source: Alan Wakefield, personal collection.

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Empire who volunteered for military service after 4 August 1914. Houghton's stressed how their robust, durable Ensignette was the perfect gift to give a loved one heading off to war, while in 1915, Kodak advertised the VPK as 'the Soldier's Camera'.

Alongside the popularity of photography as a hobby came the beginnings of modern photo journalism. In Britain, the *Daily Mirror* pioneered this new form of mass media, regularly publishing photographs as part of its news output. When war broke out in August 1914, it was obvious that the press would be hungry for images of the conflict. Weekly war news titles such as *The War Illustrated*, *The Great War* and *The Illustrated War News* were quickly put into production to meet public demand. This development in turn increased the need for photographic images of the war. Unfortunately, for both the press and public, the armies of the major European powers restricted the access of journalists and press photographers to the fighting fronts as their work was viewed as a security risk. This forced newspapers and journals to use photographs supplied by international press agencies. Many of these images depicted French or German troops and were taken behind the lines or were, in reality, photographs of pre-war military manoeuvres re-captioned as images of wartime events. When photographs of British soldiers were available, these often showed men training in the UK rather than at the front (Figure 6.2).

At this time, most images of military action took the form of dramatic illustrations drawn by artists. These were of the type that would have been familiar to readers following earlier British colonial wars in the pages of the *Illustrated London News*. The lack of 'real' war images made the press keen to acquire photographs from serving soldiers. On 21 November 1914, *The War Illustrated* published the first British 'in action' photograph of World War I, showing troops under artillery fire during the Battle of the Marne. As increasing numbers of images showing British troops were published, concern within senior military circles grew. Photographs of events such as British and German soldiers fraternizing during the 1914 Christmas Truce worked to undermine officially endorsed propaganda messages that increasingly demonized the enemy. In 1915, the War Office issued a General Routine Order aimed at banning personal cameras in the British army. Yet, despite the threat of prosecution under military law, many soldiers continued to carry cameras. This was especially the case away from the Western Front where the rules were less actively enforced.

However, the strengthening of British wartime censorship meant that from 1916 few photographs taken by serving soldiers would be published by the press. By the time of the Battle of the Somme, photography, like the printed word, was firmly under state control for propaganda purposes. From this time, images captured by a small number of official photographers came to dominate the published output, especially in relation to activity on the Western Front. In other theatres of war, soldiers' photographs were on occasion used to supplement the output of an often solo official photographer.

Figure 6.2 British official photograph showing soldiers from the British Salonika Force taking a dose of quinine in July 1916.
Source: Illustrated War News, 23 August 1916.

All photographs for potential publication were subject to censorship by a staff officer in the Intelligence Section at General Headquarters (GHQ). Those images passing this process were then dispatched to London for further censorship at the Press Bureau and later the Ministry of Information, which increasingly controlled British news and propaganda output during the war.

Soldiers serving in the Armée Française d'Orient, the principal Allied contingent in Macedonia, were also subject to restrictions relating to the taking of photographs. Although such activities as photography, with its inherent potential breach of security, were covered under the state of siege declared in France on 2 August 1914, in reality little was done to control soldiers carrying cameras. Indeed, it was not until the publishing of Circular No.8520 by French Supreme Headquarters (GQG) on 13 March 1916 that the military seriously attempted to control soldier photographers. Until this time the situation was very similar to that in Britain prior to the War Office restrictions on photography in 1915, with illustrated journals *Le Miroir* and *L'Illustration* paying for and regularly publishing photographs taken

by front line soldiers. To control the type of images taken by soldiers Circular No.8520 while not banning personal cameras called for members of the armed forces to send signed and dated prints to the army photographic service for censorship purposes. Only those photographs passing this checking process could be sent home for potential publication in the press. That numerous official circulars covering private photography had to be issued by GQG during the war shows that, just as in the British army, many soldiers bypassed military instructions and simply continued to document their war experiences without regard to official restrictions.[1]

In terms of British official photography the Salonika Campaign was something of an anomaly. Unlike the situation that prevailed on the Western Front from 1916 and in Italy and Palestine from 1917, the Macedonian theatre of war lacked a government-appointed British official photographer. Instead, three professional photographers, each with a different British paymaster, recorded aspects of the campaign in Greece and Serbia. Ernest Brooks, a former employee of the *Daily Mirror*, was appointed Britain's first official photographer in March 1916. In 1915, Brooks was sent to cover the Gallipoli Campaign on behalf of the Admiralty. Before returning to Britain, he made a visit to Salonika and is known to have taken some photographs. However, lack of documentation in either The National Archives or Imperial War Museum (IWM) makes it difficult to date the visit and identify the photographs taken by Brooks. Another former *Daily Mirror* photographer working at Salonika was Thomas Grant. His authorization to cover the campaign came from an agreement between the Newspaper Proprietors Association (NPA) and the War Office. As an employee of the NPA, rather than the War Propaganda Bureau, Grant left little in the way of a paper trail among the Wellington House Papers, the archive of both the Bureau and later Ministry of Information (MOI).[2] A note on Grant contained in a file of miscellaneous papers concerning less well-known British official photographers simply states that he was appointed 'soon after the campaign began'.[3] Similarly, there is no record of an end date for Grant's commission. However, the Wellington House Papers contain correspondence dated 18 and 19 March 1917 stating that the NPA had cancelled its arrangement with Grant due to the lack of military activity in the Balkans.[4] So it appears that the position of British official photographer at Salonika was vacant from earlier that month.

To replace Grant, the War Propaganda Bureau and War Office agreed to contract the work to an American cinematographer, Ariel Varges, who already had the task of capturing events involving British forces in and around Salonika for the cinema newsreel audience. Again, as Varges was not acting as a true official photographer, the archives are frustratingly silent regarding his contract. A letter dated 24 March 1917 states Varges had been authorized to take still photographs on the Salonika front.[5] A note in the same file confirms this appointment two days later.[6] However, we know that by early 1917 Varges was frustrated by the lack of military activity at Salonika and

in April that year secured a move to Mesopotamia where General Maude's offensive up the River Tigris had already captured Baghdad, and film and photographic coverage of this success was urgently required. Varges remained in Mesopotamia for the rest of the war. Given the prominence of his later war work the great majority of British official photographs taken during the Salonika Campaign, and now held in the Photograph Archive of the Imperial War Museum, have been attributed to Varges. However, given knowledge of Thomas Grant's presence, it is evident that such attributions should now be challenged and the latter's work duly recognized.

Grant and Varges having left Salonika, the next mention of British official photography in the Balkans is a note stating the intention of the MOI to send Mr Ashby of the *Daily Sketch* to Macedonia.[7] As this note is dated 23 September 1918 the decision appears to have been a reaction to the Allied breakthrough on the Salonika Front. However, given the subsequent rapid defeat of Bulgaria, there is no evidence that Ashby ever left Britain. This apparent lack of a British official photographer from around April 1917 until the end of the campaign was very unfortunate as it resulted in a failure to capture

Figure 6.3 Men of the 2nd East Surreys employed digging trenches as part of the 'Birdcage' defence line for Salonika in March 1916.
Source: British official photograph, IWM (Q 31841).

images of the First and Second Battles of Doiran, the two major British military actions fought during the Salonika Campaign. This leaves much of the British official photographic output for the campaign focused on the construction of the 'Birdcage' defence line during the first half of 1916, the arrival of the re-equipped Serbian army and Russian and Italian forces at Salonika, British troops training and enjoying sports and other recreational activities and the apparently smooth interaction between senior British and French commanders, in particular General Sir Bryan Mahon and General Maurice Sarrail. Another 'good news' story captured by the official photographer was the arrival of Venizelos at Salonika and his establishment of the pro-Allied Provisional Government. Damage caused by German air raids to Greek civilian property and Allied medical facilities was also given photographic coverage, as was the shooting down of Zeppelin LZ85 on 5 May 1916 and the subsequent display of the framework of the airship outside the White Tower. Images of both sides of this air war story had great propaganda value for the Allies, showing alleged German targeting of civilians and hospitals and Allied success in dealing with the Zeppelin threat (Figures 6.3–6.6).

Coverage of active military operations in the official photography is rather sparse. This reflects the relative inactivity of British forces at the time

Figure 6.4 Serbian troops landing at Mikra in April 1916.
Source: British official photograph, IWM (Q 31922)

Figure 6.5 One of a sequence of British official photographs showing men of the 10th Black Watch and 12th Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders taking part in a mock attack during training near Salonika in February 1916.
Source: IWM (Q 31789).

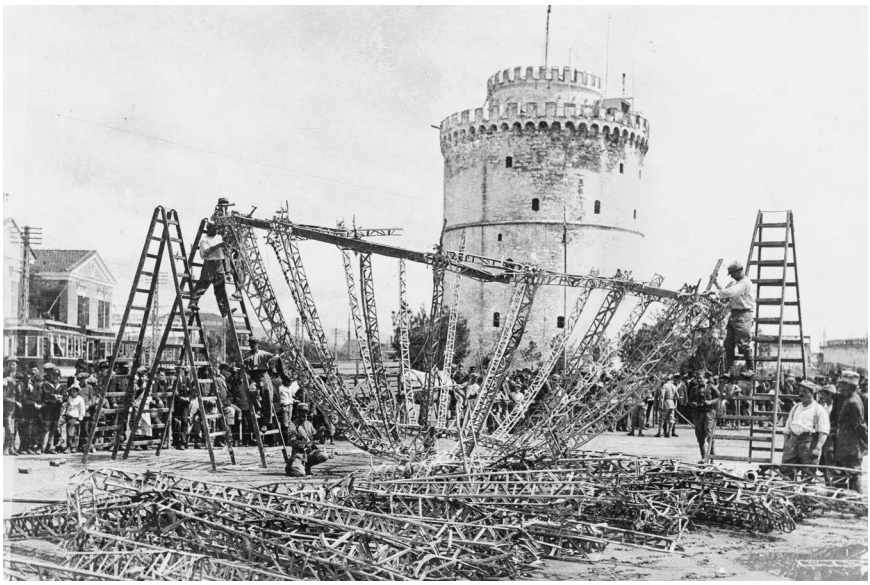

Figure 6.6 French soldiers setting up the wreckage of Zeppelin LZ.85 beside the White Tower following the shooting down of the airship on 5 May 1916.
Source: British official photograph, IWM (Q 32029).

and the difficulty the photographer had in travelling the distances between his quarters in Salonika and the front line. For example, in a letter dated 22 November 1916, Thomas Grant states:

> The transport difficulty is awful; you see one has to carry a sleeping bag and food as well and then our distances are pretty big, often sixty to seventy mile journeys. Imagine how wild I am – Monastir fell days and days ago and I have not got there yet. Ward Price and I were off yesterday, but his Rolls-Royce crocked up and now we are going tomorrow.[8]

Grant goes on to explain in the letter that he and Ward Price, while good friends, had differing reporting priorities. As a war correspondent Ward Price often wanted to get to a vantage point from which he could take in a broad sweep of activity, whereas Grant needed to get as close as possible to the action. Unfortunately for Grant, lack of alternative transport made him reliant on his friend when wishing to cover events at any significant distance from Salonika.

Figure 6.7 British wounded arriving at a Field Ambulance dressing station during operations to capture the villages of Karajakoi Bala and Zir and Yenikoi between 30 September and 4 October 1916.

Source: British official photograph, IWM (Q 32434).

Official photographers were restricted by British GHQ in terms of the subjects they could cover. This may account for the limited nature of photographs illustrating XVI Corps operations in the Struma Valley during the second half of 1916. All we have of the operation to capture Karajakoi Bala and Karajakoi Zir[9] and Yenikoi (30 September–4 October 1916) are long range photographs of the artillery bombardment, the arrival of Bulgarian prisoners, the return of British walking wounded and troops resting after the action. This is very different from the extensive coverage Ernest Brooks and his colleagues provided for the Battle of the Somme that summer. Unlike Brooks, it appears that Grant and Varges were unable to get close to the front line until well after any action had concluded. Given that these men were professional photo-journalists it is unlikely they took this decision voluntarily, and therefore I believe we can see here the heavy hand of GHQ at work. In all probability, the situation would have changed as the war progressed and senior officers grew to appreciate the morale and propaganda value of the official photographers' output. This was certainly the case on the Western Front and in the Middle East, but the lack of any officially sanctioned British cameraman on the Salonika Front from spring 1917 means that this hypothesis went untested (Figure 6.7).

In contrast, the French placed greater importance on official photography during the Salonika Campaign. The Section Photographique de l'Armée (SPA) was established in April 1915 with the dual role of providing images with propaganda value for use in the press of Allied and neutral countries, and providing a wide visual record of the French experience of the war. Official photographers from SPA were sent to every front where French troops served. In Macedonia, it is known that 23 still photographers and seven cinematographers at various times covered the campaign for SPA and later the Maison de la Presse, eleven of these professionals being sent out during 1917 and 1918.[10] This heavy resourcing of what was a secondary front reflects the greater importance placed on the Salonika Campaign by the French, where that nation held overall Allied command.

Given the limitations of the British official photographs one must turn to images captured by military personnel to gain a more rounded impression of the BSF at war. Despite the prohibition of possession and use of personal cameras an extensive cross section of British personnel visually documented their war service in the Balkans. The photographic archive at the Imperial War Museum holds a representative sample of the work of these soldier photographers. The camera owners vary from officers and men of the infantry, artillery, engineers and Royal Flying Corps (RFC) through those on the lines of communication to base staff among whom medical personnel, including nursing sisters, are well represented. The collections vary in physical content from packets of loose negatives or prints with no accompanying notes to carefully compiled and annotated albums.

As is typical with soldiers' photographs, a number of themes predominate. These include the journey to the theatre of war; local people, places

and landmarks. Also life with the unit, interaction with Allies and images of the enemy. In a way this is the soldier or nurse as a tourist, determined to capture images of new experiences. It should be remembered that the majority of personnel in the BSF were not professional soldiers. They were civilians in uniform and the environment of Macedonia and the city of Salonika was far outside their previous life experience.

What we see through the lens of the soldier's camera is a more intimate and personal view of war than that which the official photographer set out to capture for public consumption. When photographing military subjects the soldier was usually amongst friends, which resulted in images of greater informality which, while not often having the quality of composition associated with professional work, bring the viewer closer to the experience of campaigning in Macedonia. Of particular relevance in this respect are photographs of life in and just behind the front line, subjects little covered more formally given the absence of a British official photographer for key periods of the campaign. Indeed, the photographs taken by Lieutenant Colonel Henry Jourdain (5th Connaught Rangers) are the only known images covering the opening months of the campaign, with the arrival of 10th (Irish) Division and the ill-fated winter action on Kosturino Ridge. In other collections we see troops in the front line at Doiran and in the outpost line along the River Struma. Bivouac camps and dugouts in ravines predominate amongst images of the accommodation available to fighting troops. Actual images of combat and its immediate aftermath are rare. This is somewhat surprising given the inclusion of this subject matter in private photographs taken on the Western Front, at Gallipoli and in Palestine. Instead, at Salonika, we have individual portraits and group photographs of those successfully returned from trench raids and patrols, and images of prisoners. The factor most likely to account for a lack of combat-related photographs from Salonika is the low-intensity nature of warfare practiced by the BSF in contrast to other theatres of war, due to a lack of manpower, equipment and ammunition. Even in terms of Allied forces in the Balkans, British troops played very much a support role with major offensive operations being undertaken by French and Serbian forces. This provided front line soldiers with fewer opportunities to take 'action' photographs. In addition, the limited size of the front line fighting component of the BSF, only 41% of the total British force,[11] meant there were fewer potential amateur photographers in forward locations to capture such images for posterity (Figures 6.8–6.11).

The vital work of transport units on the lines of communication is also extensively covered. Without the network of roads and light railways along which lorries, horses, mules and locomotives moved munitions and supplies, the campaign could never have been fought. The predominance of such collections reflects the more sedentary way of life of such units in fixed camps behind the lines and away from immediate danger for long periods of time. Such an existence provided more scope for photography compared with the life led by the front line soldier. The same can be said for personnel in

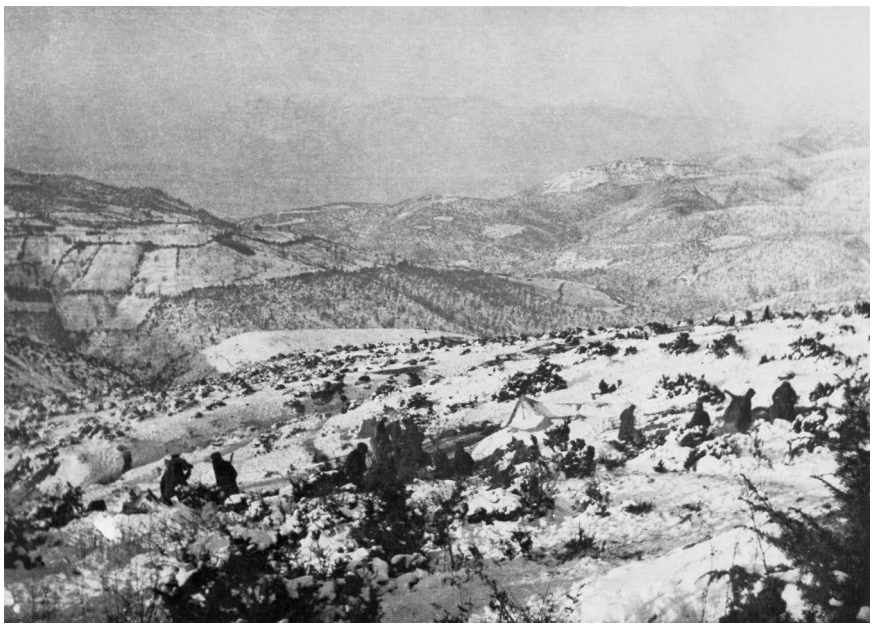

Figure 6.8 View down the reverse slope of Kosturino Ridge from the Battalion HQ bivouac of 5th Connaught Rangers, 30 November 1915.
Source: Photograph by Lieutenant Colonel Henry Jourdain, IWM (Q 55130).

Figure 6.9 Men of the 7th South Wales Borderers in a front line position at Doiran.
Source: Photograph by Lieutenant J Spyer, IWM (HU 88198).

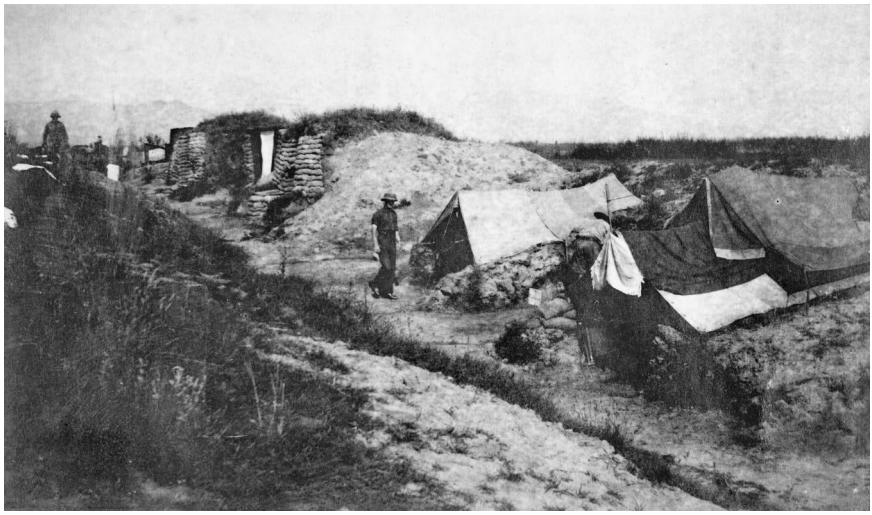

Figure 6.10 Dugouts and bivouacs of the 2nd Royal Irish Fusiliers at Yenikoi, part of the British outpost line in the Struma Valley, 1917.
Source: Photograph by Captain C H Budd, IWM (HU 81038).

Figure 6.11 Bulgarian prisoners captured by the Greek Serres Division during the Second Battle of Doiran, 18–19 September 1918.
Source: Photograph taken by Corporal Reg Phillips, IWM (HU 90608).

medical units. Photographs taken by officers, orderlies and nurses have left an extensive visual record of the casualty clearing stations, hospitals and other units that supported the BSF through a campaign where sickness was twenty times more likely to strike down a soldier than a bullet or shell (Figure 6.12).

Given the physically tough nature of campaigning in Macedonia through extremes of climate, often inadequate accommodation, basic monotonous rations and the threat of illness, especially malaria each summer, it is of little surprise that off-duty activities are well covered in the photographs taken by soldiers. Up country in Macedonia, there were no *estaminets*[12] as frequented by troops in France and Belgium. In fact, only the city of Salonika offered the soldier anything in the way of 'civilization' and that was generally off-limits to most British troops until 1918. For this reason, the army kept soldiers entertained through sports and concert parties. Individuals and groups of friends also engaged in other activities such as shooting, fishing, swimming, natural history and archaeology. When away from the front line many soldiers took opportunities to visit some of the still populated villages, as testified by photographs of local farming practices, village life, festivities and weddings (Figures 6.13 and 6.14).

Alongside the wealth of images left by these amateur photographers is the work of a unit in the BSF that had a military photographic role. This

Figure 6.12 A convoy of lorries from 913 Mechanical Transport Company (ASC) negotiating a hair-pin bend on the Bralo-Itea road, 1918.
Source: Photograph by Private Christopher Reynolds, IWM (HU 87365).

Figure 6.13 Page from an album showing photographs of a fancy-dress football match at a British military hospital on Christmas Day 1917. The original owner of the album, whose name is unknown, is indicated 'x' in the photographs.

Source: IWM (8107–09).

was the Photographic Section of 16 Wing (RFC), which was primarily concerned with the production and interpretation of prints made from glass plate negatives exposed during photographic reconnaissance flights by Nos 17 and 47 Squadrons. After a photo reconnaissance flight, magazines of exposed negatives were handed to the technical staff of the photographic section for developing, fixing and printing. Prints were then studied by specially trained photo interpreters to gather a wealth of information and make this available to headquarters and units. In addition, mosaics of overlapping prints from a reconnaissance flight were created and sent to front line units and 8th Field Survey Company (Royal Engineers) to help produce new editions of trench maps for distribution throughout the BSF.

Alongside their work with aerial photographs, staff of the Photographic Section took the opportunity during quiet periods to get behind the camera and add to the visual record of the war in the Balkans. The Section produced images recording various aspects of the BSF's base area in the form of photographic albums and sets of captioned prints. Those held in the IWM collection cover veterinary hospitals, the army's remount depot and the Base Ordnance Depot. Although the majority of the photographs are taken at ground level and form a record of typical activity,

Figure 6.14 Scenes of village life behind the lines on the Salonika Front. These images are part of a collection compiled by Sergeant Arthur Danby whilst serving with No.47 Squadron (RFC) in 1917. Along with photographs of village life, Danby also captured street scenes in the city of Salonika before and after the great fire and images of activity with his unit.
Source: IWM (2000-02-03).

the veterinary hospital and ordnance depot albums include aerial photographic mosaics. That the albums date to September and November 1917 appears to indicate that they were produced in response to the call from GHQ for material to form a history of British military activity in the Salonika Campaign, that was being collected following the establishment of the National, now Imperial, War Museum in London. Such requests for material went out to British GHQs in all theatres of war. Either that or the albums mark an attempt by commanding officers to gather material for possible post-war official histories. Whatever the case, the RFC photographers were commissioned to carry out the work as having the best photographic facilities and trained staff available to British forces in Macedonia.

Similar to this work, and possibly the catalyst for it, was a set of twenty-four photographs taken by RFC photographers and members of 8th Field Survey

Figure 6.15 One of the photographs from the set sold to raise money for those made homeless by the Salonika fire, 18–21 August 1917. This photograph shows civilians made homeless by the blaze with their salvaged possessions watching the fire from a place of safety.

Source: IWM (HU 58890).

Figure 6.16 Scene in a Salonika street market. One of a series of images covering local life in and around the city. The photographs were taken by a member of 16 Wing Photographic Section (RFC).

Source: IWM (HU 97449).

Company during and immediately after the great fire of Salonika, 18–21 August 1917. These include aerial and ground images of the fire in progress and of its aftermath, with views of devastated streets, burnt out churches and the resulting homeless population of the city. Also included are photographs of the assistance given by the British army to local people affected by the blaze. The set of Great Fire photographs was packaged and sold as a souvenir, with all the money raised going to a relief fund to help those made homeless by the fire. However, as illustrated by a set of prints loaned to IWM for copying in 2003, RFC photographers did more than capture images of the city of Salonika in a time of crisis. Like images captured by many of the amateur soldier photographers their work documents the rich and varied life of the city before the fire. The cosmopolitan population, shops, street vendors and architecture of the old city predominate. These photographs, taken with a good quality, glass plate camera, form an excellent photo-documentary record of Salonika before the great fire (Figures 6.15 and 6.16).

In conclusion, the lack of a British official photographer at Salonika after spring 1917 made photographic coverage of the campaign very different from the Western Front where official photographers were present from summer 1916 onwards. The most serious gap in the British photographic record is lack of coverage of the two battles of Doiran. In British newspapers and journals the successful September 1918 offensive was illustrated by French and Serbian official photographs along with a small number of re-used British photographs taken during 1916. Just as in terms of manpower and equipment, the BSF proved to be a low priority in terms of news, apparently not deemed worthy of a photographer from spring 1917. Luckily for history, serving soldiers filled the gap either as part of their war work or to record their personal experiences. Therefore, taken as a whole, the British photographic record of the Salonika Campaign as held by the IWM, captures the daily life and work of the BSF, and beyond the record of purely military history, provides a visual history of a Macedonia now long vanished.

Notes

1 Thanks to Anthony Petiteau, Curator of Photographs at the Musée de l'Armée, Paris, for information on amateur photography within the French army during World War I.
2 The archive is named the Wellington House Papers after the building that housed the War Propaganda Bureau from August 1914. The Bureau became part of the Department of Information in February 1917 and in March 1918 the DOI became a full government ministry.
3 IWM, OPA1/01/03/022, Correspondence relating to miscellaneous photographers concerned with MOI.
4 IWM OPA1/01/03/022, Letter from Bernard Grant to Ivor Nicholson asking the latter to assist with finding his brother a new position as a photographer, 18 March 1917 and IWM, OPA1/01/01/002, Letter from Ivor Nicholson to Rt. Hon. Charles Masterman outlining the problem of no longer being able to obtain photographs from Salonika, 19 March 1917.
5 IWM, OPA1/01/01/002, Letter from Sir Reginald Bade to Rt. Hon. Charles Masterman, 24 March 1917.

6 IWM, OPA1/01/01/002, Memorandum for Circulation, 26 March 1917.
7 IWM, OPA1/01/03/001, Notes compiled for a proposed history of World War I British official photographers.
8 IWM, OPA1/01/03/022, Quote from Thomas Grant reproduced in a letter from his brother Bernard Grant to Ivor Nicholson, 19 December 1916.
9 These two villages are the modern Monokklisia.
10 Figures provided by Veronique Goloubinoff from the Etablissement Cinéma et Photos des Armées (ecpad).
11 The National Archives, WO 106/1358: H M Lawson (Lt Gen), Report on Man-Power in the British Salonika Forces, London, 31 July 1917. The total figure included: 62,220 front line infantry, 32,513 other fighting troops (artillery, engineers, etc), 46,599 administrative troops (transport units, medical services, lines of communications), 26,079 labourers.
12 A small cafe selling alcoholic drinks.

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7 Theodore Stephanides at the Macedonian Front, 1917–18

Anthony Hirst

> On the 14th of May 1917, two young men strode importantly up the rutted and dusty road leading to Camp Toumba (officially Camp Embirikos) on the outskirts of Salonica. We, Basil Melas and I, were enlisting in the Army of National Defence or 'Venizelos' Army', as the Greek contingent with the Allied Forces in Macedonia was more usually called.

Thus begins Theodore Stephanides' retrospective account of his service on the Macedonian Front. This document has the characteristically odd title, 'Macedonian *Medley*'. 'Medley' – a mixture, or combination of various elements – is, of course, an inter-lingual pun, playing on the other meaning of 'Macedonia' in French, where a *macédoine de fruits*, for example, is a fruit salad.

This retrospective Memoir was first drafted in the 1920s, revised in 1931 and again in the 1960s. Only the 1960s version survives, and there are two copies of the typescript in London, one in the Imperial War Museum and the other in the British Library. Apart from his own still detailed but not always accurate recollections, the main source for this retrospective Memoir was the Diary he kept during his two periods of active service at the Front. And it is this Diary, rather than the Memoir, that I want to present here. The archive of Stephanides' papers, among which I found the war Diary, only came to light again in 2016, in the cellar of the London house where he spent the last decade of his life. For publication, I have integrated the Diary with the Memoir, the Diary entries for a day or a group of days preceding the treatment of the same time period in the Memoir. The resulting book, *At the Macedonian Front 1917–18: A Diary and a Memoir*, which also contains correspondence and documents relating to Stephanides' subsequent career in the Greek army (to August 1922), may have already been published by the time that this present volume is in your hands (Stephanides 2022, forthcoming).

'Theodore Stephanides' may not be a familiar name to every reader, and a brief introduction of the man is in order here. He was born in Bombay, to Greek parents, in 1896. His father, Philippos Stephanides, worked for the Ralli Brothers' enterprises in India and had married his boss's daughter, Caterina Ralli – a London Greek who never really learned to speak

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Greek despite spending the last 36 years of her life in Corfu. The family spoke English and some French at home and it was only at the age of 11, when, following Philippos' retirement, the family settled in Corfu, that Theodore learned Greek, and for the next ten years his education was in Greek. Throughout his life, however, he wrote primarily in English. After his service in the Greek army, during and after World War I, he went to Paris, to the Sorbonne, where in addition to general medicine he studied radiology with Marie Curie and astronomy with Camille Flammarion, and wrote a doctoral dissertation on the use of the microscope. He returned to Corfu in 1930 and set up the first X-ray clinic on the island. Apart from practising as a doctor and radiologist, he became an expert in freshwater biology and the control of malaria and published many scientific papers on biology, astronomy and medicine. In the 1920s, with George Katsimbalis, whom he had met on the Macedonian Front, Stephanides embarked on the translation of Greek poetry into English verse.

In 1935 he met the Durrell family, who had recently moved from England to Corfu, and many of those to whom his name *is* familiar first encountered him as a 'character' (in both senses of the word) in the books of Lawrence Durrell (1945), Henry Miller (1950) and, especially, Gerald Durrell (1956; and its sequels 1969, 1978). Recently he has been most inappropriately portrayed in the four series of the highly successful television production *The Durrells*, based (increasingly loosely) on Gerald Durrell's books.

In World War II, Stephanides served as an officer in the British Royal Army Medical Corps in Greece, North Africa and Italy. After the war, he settled in London where he worked as a senior hospital radiologist until he retired in 1961. In his long retirement, he devoted himself primarily to writing and translation. He was a published poet (three collections in English) who also wrote verse dramas, short stories and the beginnings of an autobiography (all as yet unpublished), and three separate memoirs from World War II, of which only the first, *Climax in Crete* (Stephanides 1946), was published; the other two are 'Western Desert scramble' and 'Western Desert and beyond' (multiple typescript versions of each survive), and I intend to publish all three together in a single volume. He also resumed his collaboration with Katsimbalis in the translation of Greek poetry, in which he persisted alone after Katsimbalis died in 1978; the poets translated range from Sappho (7th–6th century BC, Stephanides 2015) to Stephanides' younger contemporary D.I. Antoniou (1906–94) and his friend Lilika Papanikolaou, who sent him her poems to translate in the early 1980s. He died in London in 1983 at the age of 87.

But it is the 21-year-old Stephanides who joined a Greek artillery regiment in May 1917 who concerns us here. After only three weeks of basic training in Toumba camp, he was dispatched to the front. And that is the point at which the Diary begins. It is written in English, with an occasional word or phrase in Greek or French, and in very small writing, in a hardback, pocket-sized notebook, about 8 by 13 cm. After the heading 'My Journey' –

an allusion perhaps to Psycharis' famous book *Το ταξίδι μου* – the first two laconic entries read as follows:

> Wednesday 6 June 1917. Left Salonica about 5 p.m. Arrived Samli about 8. Managed to get a lift part of the way.
>
> Thursday 7 June. Enemy aeroplane appeared above us in the early morning. Was shelled by French but got away safely. Left for Topsin 3.30 p.m. Arrived about 7.30. Walked.

Place names in the Diary are a mixture of Greek, Turkish and Slavic forms and I have not yet been able to identify with certainty the modern names of all the places on Stephanides' route to the Front. Samli was an abandoned village to the east of modern Anchialos, Topsin is Yephyra, and Karaoglou, their next stop, is now Kastanas, about 3 km south of Akropotamos. From Karaoglou they followed the course of the Axios river to Karasouli (now Polykastro) and then turned west crossing the river to Boemitsa (Axioupoli). He says that their destination was Ghevgheli (just over the border in what was then Serbia, now the Republic of North Macedonia) and that, on 13 June, after a nine-hour march from Boemitsa, dragging the smaller guns, they arrived at the front, at a location known by its French name Confluent. I thought this might have been the *confluence* of the Ljumnica river with the Vardar, that is, the Axios, but on Stephanides' sketch map, that point, like Ghevgheli itself (held by the Bulgarians), is on the wrong side of the front line (the west-to-east broken line on the map) (Figure 7.1).

In his first tour of duty at the front, Stephanides was a private, an ordinary 'gunner', though it was not often that he was directly involved in the actual firing of guns. He had various skills which were of use to his commanding officers. His fluency in French and English meant that he was often used for liaison missions to other allied camps, or called on to interpret. He was a competent draftsman and was sent to observation posts to make drawings and maps of enemy positions. He was also instructed to make a daily record of weather conditions – these records appear in the Diary. Of course, he was also involved in the more mundane operations of levelling gun sites and excavating dugouts for the soldiers' quarters. And often he was sent out to lay telephone lines between forward observation posts and the gun positions. And he spent many days in observation posts with his captain, recording and then relaying the captain's instructions and co-ordinates to the gunners by telephone.

After eight months at the front, in February 1918, Stephanides was sent back to the Salonika area, to an officers' training camp run by the British, and remained there for six months. In August 1918, he was sent to a different position on the front, now as a cadet officer. This time the route to the front was via Kilkis, and their destination 'was the Ravin des Cascades, a deep gully, running roughly west to east, a little to the south of the villages of Mayadag and Karasinanci'. These villages are Phanos and Playia in Greek, a few kilometres south of Stephanides' previous posting.

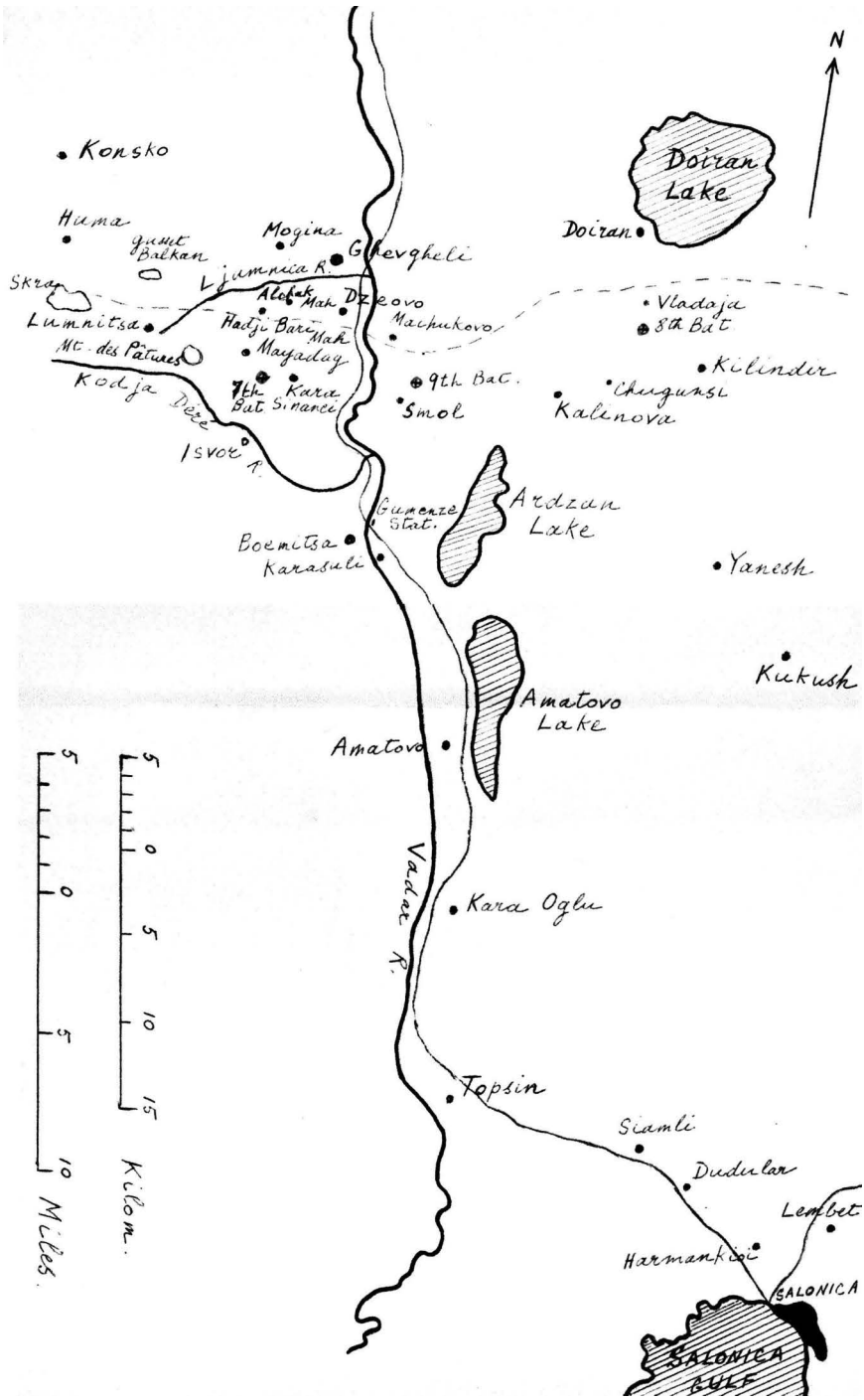

Figure 7.1 Stephanides' sketch map of the sector of the Macedonian Front where he served (a map pasted into the typescript of 'Macedonian Medley').

Whether or not the Diary will add anything new to the historian's understanding of operations in the very restricted area of the Macedonian Front of which Stephanides had first-hand knowledge, I cannot judge, not being a historian myself. What the Diary certainly does provide is a fascinating account of the experience of the day-to-day reality of war, in a part of the front that was relatively stable at the time – the reality of war as seen through the eyes of a very intelligent and well-read young man, with a robust sense of humour and a keen appreciation of the qualities and failings of his fellow soldiers and officers. There is also a lot of information about dietary and medical issues – Stephanides, as already noted, went on to become a doctor – and technical details about munitions.

The Diary entry for 16 June 1917, his third full day at the front, gives an example of the lack of co-ordination between officers – issuing conflicting commands.

> That afternoon we were sent to place the telephone wire between the observation post and the place where our tents were (which is a kind of telephone centre). We went but were sent back by an officer who seemed very annoyed as he was afraid that the Bulgarians by observing our movement might guess of the existence of our batteries. He told us to return after sunset.

They went back in the evening, and had finished laying the telephone lines by midnight, at which point Stephanides became aware of a new kind of beauty, created by modern warfare:

> I had a good look at the Greek and Bulgarian lines and I have seldom seen anything so beautiful. The whole Front was continually lit up with red, blue, green, yellow and white flares, rockets, search-lights […] etc., some bright and others faint, some stationary, others twinkling rapidly.

On Thursday 17 July, he illustrates that the real danger of enemy planes was not the bombs they occasionally dropped, but the observations that they made.

> In [the] morning [an] enemy aeroplane flew over us low enough for me to make out the black crosses on [its] wings with my opera-glass. [It] was shelled, [and] some empty shrapnel-cases fell very close to us. Aeroplane got away. This aeroplane had evidently [and] unfortunately spotted our 1st Battery. At 11 a.m. a huge enemy shell […] came screaming through the air and fell with a roar some distance behind the Battery. The next shell fell almost on the guns. 8 more shells […] were fired, all falling very near our guns […] I saw everything at a distance of about 300 metres and found it very interesting.

War was a new experience to Stephanides and it fascinated him. His interest was often greater than any fear he may have felt. In his diary, he is always intent on describing in minute and often scientific detail the experience of being in a battle zone. This same entry for 17 July continues:

> One heard first the long scream of the shell, then the roar, whilst one saw a great mass of earth, stones and black smoke thrown high in the air. Sometimes one heard the whistling screams as fragments of the shell were hurled away. At once after the roar one heard the rattle of falling stones and fragments some of which almost reached us. At one time I saw an entire pine-tree flung into the air. I was able to see the details very clearly through my opera-glass.

He even had the presence of mind (and a watch) to time and record the intervals between the shells as they were falling.

It is a recurrent theme of the Diary that enemy planes regularly appear, are shot at and get away unscathed. There are only a few references to an enemy or allied plane being shot down. Nor is the constant artillery bombardment by each side of the opposing trenches and gun batteries any more effective. The main impression is of a vast expenditure of munitions with very little achieved, other than to maintain the prevailing stalemate, and the more or less fixed line of the front in this area. One rare instance of an infantry assault, by Bulgarians against a French position, is noted but it did not lead to hand-to-hand fighting as the attack was dispersed by the French and Greek artillery.

On one occasion Stephanides observed the comic (and risky) behaviour of a French aviator:

> French aeroplane came flying very low down above us so that we could see the pilot waving his hand to us. We of course waved back and cheered. The observer was sitting on the side of the aeroplane waving his feet in space.

On another occasion he notes with dry humour the consequence of misdirected Bulgarian artillery fire:

> During the afternoon Bulgars shelled Confluent which is just at the foot of the hill where our wireless post is. They were trying to destroy the French marine Battery [...] but did not get anywhere near it, they got the French cemetery though and several corpses were killed for the 2nd time.

Stephanides himself seems to have to led a charmed life, experiencing an extraordinary number of near-death incidents, or 'close shaves' as he sometimes calls them, when bullets, shell fragments or flying rocks came within

centimetres of killing him. Yet he never sustained anything but the most minor wounds. One night, in January 1918, his passion for astronomy proved almost fatal:

> During the evening I got out the observation post telescope and examined a few of the splendours of the sky: the crescent of Venus, the lunar circuses, Jupiter with two satellites on each side and two dark bands on its disc[,] and Saturn's rings. […] I showed them to the others and gave them (including the officer in charge) a short lesson on astronomy which seemed to interest them. When they had left I was still examining Jupiter when suddenly a machine-gun opened slow fire […] and four bullets whistled just above my head cutting some leaves from a bush just behind me. Several more thudded into the parapet in front. If I had not been bending to look through [the] telescope the first ones would have got me.

Another of his near escapes highlights the almost ridiculous composure –'stiff upper lip'– of a British officer. This was on 17 September 1918.

> Received orders to lay a line to Raviné which was to serve as [a] temporary observation post. Set off with 2 telephonists loaded with wire etc. at 1.30 a.m. to meet [a] British officer who was to serve as guide. Found British officer all right but soon he lost his way and we wandered into the old 'No-man's-land' […]. Suddenly Bulgars started terrific bombardment with shrapnel and high explosives. We all bolted across open [ground], escaping many times by [a] miracle and dived into [an] unfinished trench. A 6-inch shell burst on traverse between [the] officer and myself knocking us both over and half choking us with dust and smoke. Each thought that the other had been done for but fortunately [we were] both wrong. In [the] confusion of shelling [I] lost [the] guide and wandered about with my 2 telephonists looking for him. Shelling gets hotter and hotter. Found [a] dug-out and left my 2 men inside and continued to search by myself. Lost my way but fortunately saw some British dug-outs. Found the officer in one of them having tea. He calmly remarked that he had not expected to see me again in one piece. [I] had tea and bread and jam with him and several other officers.

Soon after this, 'the bombardment calmed down', and, with a British lance-corporal as their new guide, they started laying the telephone line, but the 'bombardment soon began again'. Nevertheless, with shells bursting around them and with 'rifle and machine-gun bullets continuously humming around [their] heads', they got the job done by 3 o'clock the following morning, with one 'rather comic episode':

> When passing along certain trench our guide advised us to be very quiet as [the] Bulgars had [a] listening post close by. Up till that moment we

> had been as quiet as mice but from then onwards we made noise enough for an army corps. Our guide gave the signal himself by stumbling over [an] empty biscuit-tin which lay in middle of trench and kicking it a dozen yards with much clatter. After that we could not go 10 paces without somebody falling over something or dropping his rifle or his tin helmet on something or other. And we always chose a lull in the shelling for our performances. It may have been a coincidence, but that particular trench was completely wiped out by Bulgarian artillery before the morning. Fortunately they were obliging enough to wait until we had left it before beginning their stunt but they cut our precious wire (which ran along the trench) to pieces.

By this time, though, the fighting was almost over, and on 21 September Stephanides observed the Bulgarians' preparations for withdrawal, 'everywhere blowing up their ammunition dumps and setting fire to stores'. Three days later he and his companions inspected the abandoned Bulgarian positions and were amazed at the thoroughness of the destruction. And soon after that the Greeks themselves started to withdraw to Kalinova (now Soultoyianneïka), 'from where', Stephanides wrote, 'we shall probably go the to Struma Front'. After a long delay in Kalinova, they moved on to Juvesna (Assiros), between Salonika and Serres, and it was at Juvesna that they heard of the Armistice of 11 November 1918.

Stephanides remained in the Greek army for almost four more years, serving in mainly administrative roles, first in Asia Minor and then at Adrianoupolis in Eastern Thrace. The only records of these years are letters that he wrote, mainly to his parents, and a number of military documents. His attitude to the Greek army and to his role in it changed dramatically after Venizelos lost the election of November 1920 and the King returned from exile, and the main event of this period for Stephanides was his imprisonment for 'showing contempt' towards the King. Summoned by his commanding officer in Alexandroupolis to explain his absence from a service of thanksgiving (in December 1921) on the first anniversary of the return to Greece of King Constantine, Stephanides had declared 'I could not […] praise God for the return of King Constantine since in my opinion on that day began the accumulation of many things detrimental to the Fatherland'. When he was eventually brought before a military court in January 1922, he was found guilty as charged, fined 100 drachmas, and sentenced to 30 days in prison, but as he had already spent 50 days in prison awaiting trial he was immediately released. He kept the receipt for the 100-drachma fine.

He was extremely angry at the humiliation he had suffered at the hands of military commanders for whom he had little or no respect, and talked of applying for a transfer to active service in Asia Minor. It appears that this did not happen, and that he determined to leave the army; and in August 1922, he obtained a rather less-than-honourable discharge and set off to Paris to pursue his scientific interests. The King himself had intervened

requiring that Stephanides (by then a lieutenant) and some other officers be stripped of their rank before being discharged. It is hardly surprising that when World War II reached Greece on 28 October 1940, Stephanides did not volunteer for the Greek army, but immediately joined the British Royal Army Medical Corps, even though he was resident in Greece at the time.

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8 ‘Baby killers’ in the Balkans

Airship raids on Salonika and their impact

Roderick Bailey

A defining image of the material culture of the Macedonian Front is the spectacle of the skeleton of a shot-down Zeppelin on display by Salonika’s White Tower. This was some of the salvaged wreckage of the LZ85, a German airship that, in the first half of 1916, had attempted several times to bomb the city. Those efforts, which ended with the LZ85 being shot down, comprised the full extent of Germany’s airship campaign on Europe’s south-eastern front. No account of this corner of the war discusses them in depth. In *The Gardeners of Salonika*, for example, Alan Palmer (1965: 61) devotes a single sentence to the LZ85, noting that its demise at the hands of British naval gunners ‘raised the spirits’ of Allied soldiers serving in Salonika and especially those of British troops, ‘for their families at home had already been subjected to raids of this type and it was to be another four months before the first Zeppelin was shot down on English soil’. The impact of that short-lived campaign was not confined to improving the mood of Allied soldiers, however. Drawing principally on contemporary sources, including press and military reporting, what follows seeks to demonstrate that the effects took multiple forms, ranging from alarm and delight among soldiers and civilians who found themselves targeted by this new form of aerial warfare, to advantages accrued by Allied intelligence officers from the airship’s destruction and the capture of its crew.

* * *

Originally designated LZ55, the LZ85 was a ‘P’ Class German Army airship built in Potsdam and launched in September 1915. It was more than 500 feet in length and 55 feet wide, capable of speeds of over 50 miles per hour and round-trips of more than 1,000 miles, and could carry more than 3,000kg of bombs, as well as a crew of 12 occupying two ‘gondolas’ slung underneath. After completing three raids on the Eastern Front in October 1915, the LZ85 was assigned to operations in the Balkans in January 1916. This meant a move to a new base at Temesvar in Hungary, which is today’s Timişoara in Romania. It was from there that it raided Salonika, a distance of 380 miles away.[1] LZ85’s

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first raid took place on the night of 31 January/1 February 1916. One British report, written a day later, records that incendiary bombs dropped from the airship destroyed warehouse space of the Banque de Salonique, damaged a British transport ship moored at the quay, and caused multiple deaths: 'seven or eight Greek refugees' unloading the ship; more Greeks in private houses hit a short distance from the port; and a British soldier, a Greek soldier and a French soldier.[2] An abortive attempt to reach Salonika on the night of 8–9 February came next, before the LZ85 carried out its second raid on the night of 17–18 March, when it dropped a few bombs on Allied camps. The third raid, on the night of 4–5 May 1916, was its last. The airship left its base on the evening of 4 May and arrived over Salonika at 2.05 the following morning. The crew's intention had been to drop more bombs on Allied camps and 'military establishments'.[3] Instead they were met by intense anti-aircraft fire, hit several times, and forced to crash-land in the Vardar marshes.[4] French and Serbian soldiers rounded up the crew a few hours later.[5]

By comparison to Germany's airship campaigns on the Western and Eastern Fronts, three raids were not many and the damage caused was slight. When targeting Britain, for example, German airships carried out a total of 51 raids, during the course of which they dropped nearly 6,000 bombs, killed 557 people, injured another 1,358, and caused £1.5 million worth of damage (Guttman 2018: 72). The LZ85 dropped a few dozen bombs and inflicted a handful of casualties. One observer estimated the financial value of its most costly act of destruction – the burning of the Banque de Salonique's warehouse – at three million francs, which was roughly the equivalent of £120,000, and the lost material was described as 'mainly' enemy capital anyway and not Allied stores.[6]

The impact of the LZ85's brief campaign can also be assessed in other terms. One consequence, for example, were the emotions provoked among those whom it was trying to target. Today it may be tempting to dismiss Zeppelins as comical. In early 1916, they were considered formidable enemies. This was a view shaped partly by powerful pre-war imagery, such as that found in H.G. Wells' *The War in the Air*, of airships as terrifying forms of modern technology capable of laying waste to cities, and partly by the apparent ease with which wartime Zeppelins were now going about their work: they flew higher and faster than most other aircraft and had proved extremely difficult to bring down. They also possessed a reputation for appearing with little or no warning and dropping bombs indiscriminately and at will. 'The Zepps have begun to pay us attention', one British officer wrote home in March 1916 after finding himself on the receiving end of the LZ85's second raid on Salonika.

> They provide a d---d [sic] undesirable experience. A few nights ago I woke at 3 to hear a report, the first of a series of about 15. You may never have been through a Zepp. raid before, but you recognise it

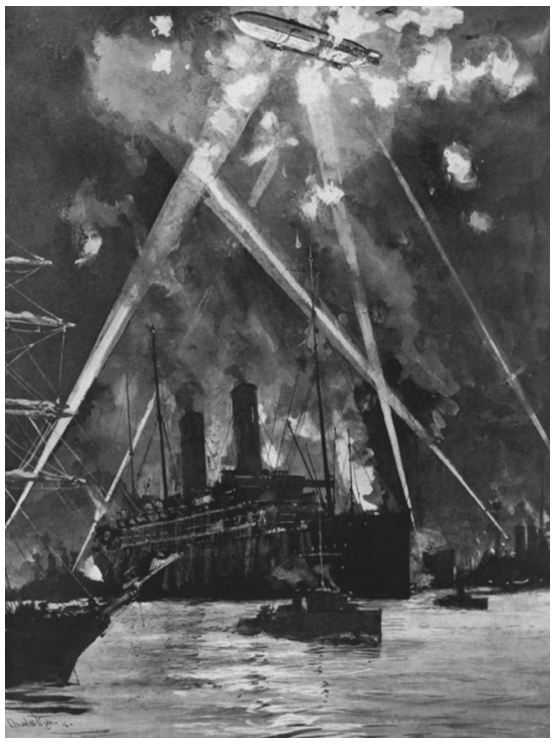

Figure 8.1 Artist's impression of the fate of the LZ85, shot down over Salonika on 5 May 1916.
Source: The Graphic, 22 July 1916

> without being told. The reports sound diabolical in the silence of the night. The bombs followed at about ten seconds interval, and the reports came in a direct route for my camp. The twelfth bomb went off within about 200 yards, and made a flash like lightning. I had just time to wonder whether I had ten years to live or ten seconds when the next bomb fell a bit further off. The Zepp. hung for several minutes almost vertically over me, it was turning on its course. One could see it against the starlight.
>
> (Letter from anonymous officer of the Royal Irish Rifles, quoted in *The Northern Whig*, 20 March 1916)

Zeppelins were a new technology, almost otherworldly. For some, the sight of the LZ85 suddenly overhead was exhilarating. After watching its demise, one nursing sister stationed in Salonika wrote:

> At 2 a.m. on the morning of the 5 of May we were awakened by the explosion of bombs, and hurriedly threw on our long coats and went

> outside to see what was going on. The searchlights were very vivid, and we soon found the raider – a Zeppelin – over the harbour, presumably trying to bomb some ammunition ships. For about a quarter-of-an-hour the sight was magnificent. The airship could be watched with ease, the shells from our guns bursting all round it… Then for about ten minutes we could see the aviators searching about, when suddenly there were two tremendous bangs, followed by a blaze of light. By this time we had all rushed down to the sea just in our pyjamas, a big coat each, and our bed slippers. Then we saw the thing fall, a mass of flames… I think I was never so excited in all my life.
>
> (Letter from anonymous nursing sister, quoted in *The Whitby Gazette*, 2 June 1916)

'It was a grand spectacle', another witness wrote to his mother of the LZ85's fate. 'I wanted to see a Zepp, but in my fondest dreams, I never imagined that I should have the joy of seeing one "strafed"' (Letter quoted in *Exeter and Plymouth Gazette*, 20 May 1916).

Figure 8.2 Souvenir hunters in the Vardar marshes, May 1916.
Source: Imperial War Museum, Q 31953

A related response was outrage. At exactly that time, enemy airships were waging a bombing campaign against France and Britain that was consistently presented in newspapers as an illegal practice responsible for the deaths of women and children. It was an image that endured. 'I thought you might like this P.C. of some of the Captured Baby Killers', one soldier wrote home to his father in 1917, on the back of a postcard of the LZ85's captive crew; 'I think they look [like] what they are'.[7]

Press reporting made considerable capital of the airship raids on Salonika. Some coverage presented the attacks as further evidence of German barbarity: 'The Terror by Night' ran a *Belfast Telegraph* headline on 18 February 1916, above a report of the first attack. The LZ85's destruction in May, meanwhile, was a cause for celebration. Dramatic accounts of its final moments were widely printed (see, for example, *The Times*, 8 May 1916). Some reports were accompanied by artists' impressions, eyewitness statements and photographs of the wreckage (see, for example: *Excelsior: Journal Illustré Quotidien*, 18 May, 21 May, 25 May, 2 June and 7 June 1916; *The Daily Mirror*, 26 May 1916; *The Sphere*, 27 May 1916; *The Illustrated London News*, 27 May 1916; *Tatler*, 31 May 1916; and *Le Pays de France*, 1 June 1916) (Figure 8.1).

Resentment at the raids and relief that they were over may help explain the elation and satisfaction with which those reports were written. But the Zeppelin's successful destruction was also a welcome diversion that added meaning to the Allied presence at Salonika.[8] At the time, comparatively little was happening in Macedonia that was especially exciting or newsworthy, yet the British population would have to wait until September 1916 before the first German airship was brought down over Britain.[9]

A sense of novel achievement, coupled with fascination at this new method of attack, is certainly evident in the interest shown in the airship's skeleton, which French troops recovered from its initial resting place in the Vardar marshes and put on public display by the White Tower. This interest extended to the attraction and distraction of securing pieces as mementos (Figure 8.2). 'If you think for a moment of the number of Zeppelins that have been brought down, and where, you will realise a bit of genuine Zeppelin will be a rarity', one officer wrote to his father after he and his friends had waded into the marshes for a look.

> An immediate rush was made for souvenirs, but we were not allowed to move any machinery, so the only thing one got were bomb-droppers, lumps of framework, and remnants of the gas-bag cover. One of our engineers, after sweating away for over half an hour, got half an engine to bits and got out the carburettor, but had to hand it over… I hung on to my piece of framework ... and now have enough aluminium for some photo frames if only I can get it home.
>
> (Letter quoted in *The Shipley Times and Express*, 2 June 1916)

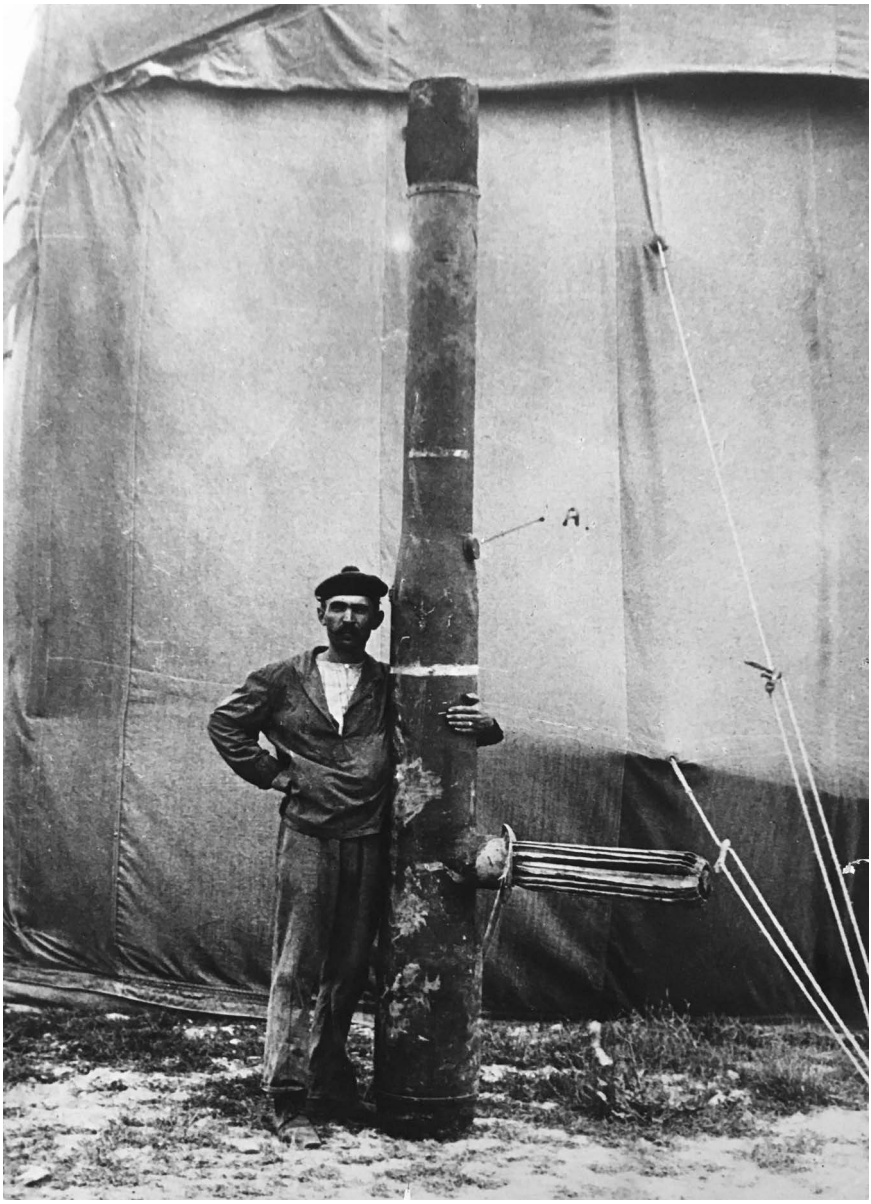

Figure 8.3 A salvaged piece of the LZ85 photographed for intelligence purposes.
Source: TNA AIR 11/240.

A flourishing trade developed in a variety of items fashioned from the airship's metalwork, from napkin rings and paperknives to brooches and crucifixes. Today, they remain collectors' items. Other souvenirs took the form of photographs of the wreckage and the crew, which became subjects for postcards produced for sale and sending home (for more about the postcards, see Wardle 2017: 231–35).

* * *

One way in which the downing of the LZ85 benefited the Allied war effort less publicly was by providing insight into enemy methods of airship warfare. This came principally from two sources. One was the wreckage. While the enduring images of the LZ85 are those found in postcards and photographs of its metalwork lying in the Vardar marshes or laid out by the White Tower, a series of sharper images survives among files at the UK National Archives: ranging from pictures of large sections of airframe to photographs of small pieces of machinery, these had been taken for intelligence purposes with a view to better understanding the construction and capabilities of German airships and improving methods of countering their attacks and bringing them down. Some photographs were taken in Salonika (Figure 8.3). Others were taken in Britain, to where several pieces of wreckage were shipped for continued scrutiny (Figure 8.4).[10] Admiralty intelligence reports from 1917 contain detailed results from that research.[11]

The second source of airship intelligence was the crew. Both French and British interrogators questioned them. The first interrogations focused mainly on the LZ85's history, its raids on Salonika, and the crew's careers.[12] Six months later, by which time the prisoners had been separated from each other and moved to camps in France, British intelligence officers interrogated them afresh, and priorities this time included details about construction, navigation and what the prisoners knew about the careers and activities of other German airships and their crews. Surviving reports record the results. At first glance, some of that information may seem both irrelevant and outdated. For instance, it included stories such as this one about the LZ37, an airship destroyed over Belgium in June 1915:

> [It] came down near Ghent; 8 officers and men were killed, but one man (*Obersteuermann* Alfred Muehler) had a most miraculous escape. The LZ.85 prisoners said that this man fell with the wreckage many hundreds of feet and pierced the roof of a Belgian almshouse. Two old women who were in the room died, but Muehler survived. He was given two months' leave to recover from the shock and afterwards rejoined the Airship Service.[13]

In fact, the deliberate collection of details like these was designed to assist with proven methods of persuading other prisoners to talk: if another captive

could be convinced that his interrogators knew the most intimate details about German airships and their crews, he might feel less inclined to be silent. And it is clear that the British were pleased with what they managed to glean from the LZ85's crew. 'The crew of LZ.85 appeared very well informed as to the development of the Military Airship Service', recorded their interrogators, who considered them not only 'deeply interested' in their calling but also 'extraordinarily fond of "talking shop"'. It was observed that they had evidently benefited from the airship service's habit of circulating among its crews the logs of different airships 'for general reading'. It was also noted that, even as prisoners, 'the crew of LZ.85 seem to have been kept singularly well posted up [sic] in the subsequent doings of airships – no doubt through letters [received] from Germany'. From this questioning, details were collected of the individual careers of 30 officers of the German military airship service. Useful information was also elicited by showing the prisoners photographs of the latest Zeppelins, even though they had never seen them in the flesh. 'One very intelligent mechanic asked several questions about these new ships', his interrogators recorded. 'He would not credit the existence of a machine gun platform in the stern, and said that owing to possible escapes of gas it would be impossible to use a machine gun from that position…'[14]

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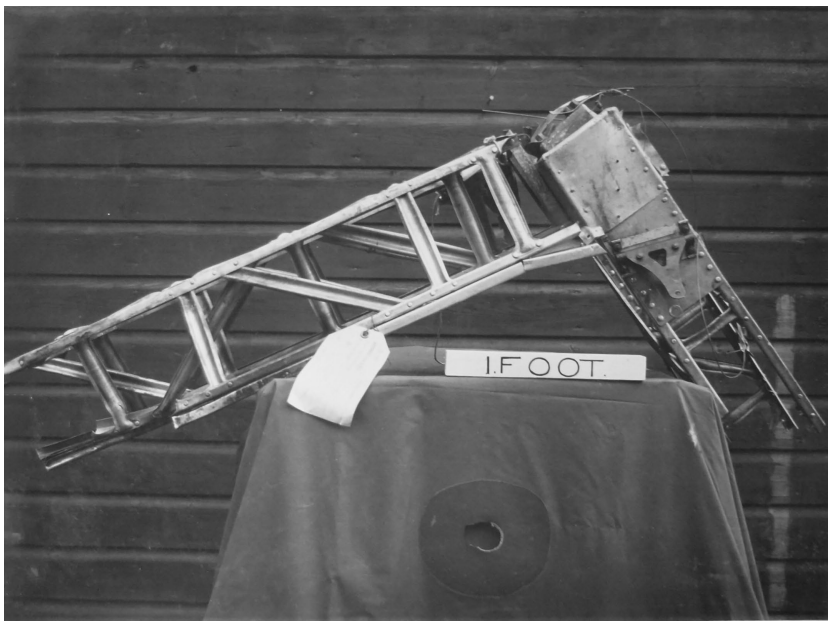

Figure 8.4 Piece of the LZ85 brought to Britain for analysis.
Source: TNA AIR 11/240.

The effects of the LZ85's presence on the Macedonian Front went beyond the handful of casualties caused, the morale-boost of its demise and the teaspoons forged from its wreckage. Its raids excited servicemen and civilians who found themselves suddenly targeted and gave journalists fuel for aggressive reporting about the morals of the Allies' enemies. Its disappearance not only raised spirits locally but was also employed to cheer war-weary populations at home in Britain and France (airships had been bombing French families, too). The recovery of its wreckage and the capture of its crew, meanwhile, created a rare opportunity to extract exploitable information about Germany's airship capabilities. The story of the LZ85 may feature fleetingly in accounts of World War I in Macedonia, but its brief life and fate offers windows onto multiple aspects both of that campaign and of the wider war, too.

Notes

1 'Description of LZ 85', 1917, The National Archives [hereafter TNA] AIR 1/2103/207/31.
2 A.C. Wratislaw to Sir F. Elliot, 2 February 1916, TNA AIR 1/657/17/122/561. Press reporting put the death toll higher. *The Scotsman* (4 February 1916), for example, reported the total as 11. According to the *Liverpool Daily Post* (3 February 1916), it was 29.
3 'Information Furnished by the Crew of the Zeppelin on Interrogation', 10 May 1916, papers of Captain T.F. Higham, 09/77/1, IWM. This document is different in some of its content to a report of an identical title and date in TNA AIR 1/541/16/15/1.
4 Allied sources conflict as to how the airship was brought down. It has been generally accepted that HMS *Agamemnon*, firing from the harbour, was responsible for the crucial hits; but a motor torpedo boat also engaged it, while at least one anti-aircraft battery, firing from a position inland, shot at it as well: the War Diary of the 32nd Anti-Aircraft Section records that it fired 58 rounds after its appearance overhead (War Diary entry, 5 May 1916, TNA WO 95/4801). For their part, the captured crew, according to statements made to their interrogators, believed that they had been hit over both land *and* sea ('Information Furnished by the Crew of the Zeppelin on Interrogation', 10 May 1916, papers of Captain T.F. Higham, 09/77/1, IWM).
5 Some accounts claim that some members of the crew escaped or were killed. In fact, all 12 crew members survived and were captured.
6 A.C. Wratislaw to Sir F. Elliot, 2 February 1916, TNA AIR 1/657/17/122/561.
7 Postcard, K. Newman to 'Mr Newman', 15 June 1917, author's collection.
8 After the airframe was displayed in Salonika, one war correspondent noted 'satisfaction' also among the city's population, 'who assemble daily to examine the carcase [sic] of their old enemy'. *Newcastle Journal*, 22 May 1916.
9 This was the SL11, which was shot down over Cuffley, Hertfordshire, in the early hours of 3 September 1916.
10 Photographic album of frames and components from airships L33, L48, L49 and LZ85, TNA AIR 11/240.
11 See, for example: 'Description of LZ 85', 1917, TNA AIR 1/2103/207/31.
12 'Information Furnished by the Crew of the Zeppelin on Interrogation', 10 May 1916, TNA AIR 1/541/16/15/1.

13 Report on the Examination of the Crew of the Destroyed German Military Airship LZ.85, Jan. 1917, GHQ Home Forces, TNA AIR 1/541/16/15/1.
14 *Ibid.*

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9 Malaria and the Salonika Campaign

Mark Harrison

Malaria was one of the defining features of the Salonika campaign. Few troops stationed in that theatre during World War I escaped infection and most succumbed to malaria on multiple occasions (Mikankowski 2011: 108). While offering no side an obvious advantage, the disease delayed or halted combat operations and took a heavy toll among civilians, particularly refugees. Although it was rarely fatal, malaria sapped the morale of troops, inducing a state of listlessness and apathy, known to the British as 'Balkan Tap' (Hamilton 1921: 361). In this chapter, I will revisit aspects of what is already a familiar story but will question some of the statements that have been made about malaria and its control during the campaign, particularly the measures taken by the British. The significance of the campaign lay in the challenge that it posed to conventional views of malaria control. By 1914, there had been significant improvements in this regard and both sickness and mortality among troops stationed in tropical regions had been falling for some time (Curtin 1989; Arnold 1993: 76). But World War I and particularly the campaign in Salonika showed the continuing vulnerability of troops on military expeditions, even in parts of Europe that were considered relatively safe from a medical perspective. Indeed, the eminent malariologist Sir S.R. Christophers (1939: 283) later declared that 'The Macedonian experience was one of the greatest medical surprises of the war. Both British and French troops were affected, the total casualties from malaria being quite unanticipated'.

Malaria was a major cause of casualties in many theatres of the war but the greatest number of casualties – if not actually the highest death rate – occurred in the Salonika theatre. Taking the figures for British troops alone, the estimated case incidence for Macedonia and the Salonika plain from October 1916 to the end of the war was 369 per 1,000, the number of recoded cases being 162,517, with 787 deaths. The only other theatre that appears to come close is East Africa, with an estimated case incidence of 126 per 1,000 in the period 1915–18; the number of malaria cases being 145,859, with 831 deaths (Brabin 2014: 4). Even allowing for under-reporting and misdiagnosis, it is clear that the loss of manpower in Salonika was extremely serious. Among British troops, 34,762 men were invalided from the theatre, many of

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whom were incapable of further active service (Palmer 1965: 142). The armies of other nations suffered similar losses. For example in 1916, the French Army had only 20,000 of 120,000 men capable of active service; there were 60,000 admissions to hospital due to malaria out of 115,000 troops, equivalent to 85–95% of the army (Fantini 1996: 243–59).

The chief reason for the prominence of malaria in Salonika was the abundance of mosquitoes and a large reservoir of people who acted as hosts for the malaria parasite, many of whom were asymptomatic on account of immunity acquired in childhood. Broadly speaking, there were two environments that favoured malaria in Salonika. One consisted of low-lying, thickly vegetated and swampy valleys, on which there were scattered villages made of mud-brick houses. The other was mountainous terrain traversed by deep ravines and covered by brushwood and other undergrowth, often containing streams and stagnant pools of water and in some areas, like the Doiran front, larger bodies of water (Hamilton 1921: 361). These two environments provided ideal breeding grounds for the dominant vector species of the Anopheles genus of mosquitoes, the females of which spread malaria parasites to humans while taking their blood meal. Several species of this genus were considered important vectors of malaria in Salonika – a conclusion that is likely to have been correct – and each preferred slightly different habitats. Weedy streams were the favourite haunt of *Anopheles superpictus* and *maculipennis*, while *A. pseudopictus* preferred the edges of pools and lakes (Willoughby and Cassidy 1918: 16).

Although there was some uncertainty over the relative abundance, distribution and seasonal prevalence of different species of Anopheles in the Salonika theatre (Waterson 1918: 3), it is evident that troops were stationed in, and moved through, diverse ecological areas. This diversity may partly account for some of the differences in malaria incidence that historians have observed between the French and British armies. The dominant species of the valleys – *maculipennis*– was active between May and November, whereas the dominant species in the hills – *superpictus* – was active from July to October (Wenyon 1921: 184). This helps to explain the fact that cases in the French army, which largely inhabited the hills on the left of River Vardar, peaked in August and those for the British Army (1917–18) in October/November, for much of the latter was then stationed in the low-lying Struma valley. The fact that British troops were removed from the lowest and worst affected areas at the end of May 1917, may have helped to reduce malarial infection but their location on the right bank of the Struma is still likely to have been more malarious than the positions occupied by the French.

Another thing to note about malaria in Salonika is that there were at least two species of parasite, the most common being *Plasmodium vivax*, which produces symptoms in 48-hour cycles. This species of parasite can remain dormant in the liver for a long time (depending on evolution to climatic conditions) and can produce relapses of symptoms annually unless treated. In Salonika, most of these relapsed cases tended to occur in the hot weather,

in June or July (Anderson 1922: 39). The other type of malaria present in Salonika was caused by the *Plasmodium falciparum* parasite. Falciparum malaria does not relapse but it was and generally still is regarded as more deadly than the malaria produced by the commoner vivax parasite. For this reason, it was often called 'Malignant Tertian' or 'Sub-tertian' malaria as opposed to 'Benign Tertian', which was invariably equated with vivax. However, as one study put it, 'A simple typical attack is rarely seen in Macedonia. Mosquitoes are so numerous and so heavily infected that human infection is usually multiple' (Goodall 1919: 158). Another report stated that many cases initially considered to be falciparum later suffered relapses of vivax malaria (Wenyon 1921: 191).

These are important observations because they cast doubt on any neat correlation between serious cases of malaria and infection with falciparum. Indeed, there are several reasons to believe that vivax may have been responsible for deaths attributed to falciparum malaria. Firstly, according to one study of serious malaria cases, it was difficult to determine the species of parasites in about 40% of patients when their blood was examined (Falconer and Anderson 1917: 607–10). Secondly, in 1916, there was a high peak in mortality among British soldiers in June/July at a time when the number of new infections would have been low (see Figure 9.1). This strongly suggests that most deaths in that year were due to relapses of vivax rather than falciparum. However, this pronounced summer mortality peak may also reflect the fact that British troops were then stationed in the area known as the 'Birdcage'. It is possible that mosquito species in the area around Salonika were active earlier than those in the Struma, for example. However, there is no strong evidence to suggest that this was the case, and the fact that cases peaked as early as June suggests that they were relapses rather than fresh infections. Indeed, this was the conclusion reached by medical officers (Anderson 1922: 39).

Although the proportion of admissions to hospital attributable to either type of parasite is impossible to determine using admission statistics, it might be assumed that the majority of deaths that occurred among British troops in the autumn were due to falciparum malaria, as it is generally thought to be more deadly than vivax. While this is possibly the case, the picture is far from clear. A study of malaria among Serbian troops by the British medical officers Gaskell and Millar (1920: 382–3), working at the Pathological Laboratory attached to 41st General Hospital in Salonika, found that some of the most serious – and ultimately fatal cases – showed a more rapid development of parasites than was typical in so-called malignant tertian malaria – a pattern more typical of vivax than falciparum. They noted that some of the fatal cases examined were due to what they described as 'an intense proliferation of the malaria parasite in the blood-stream' and that this condition was 'in sharp contrast' to the majority of malignant tertian cases, in which it often proved difficult to find parasites in the peripheral blood. They referred to this type of potentially fatal malaria as 'septicaemic' as opposed to

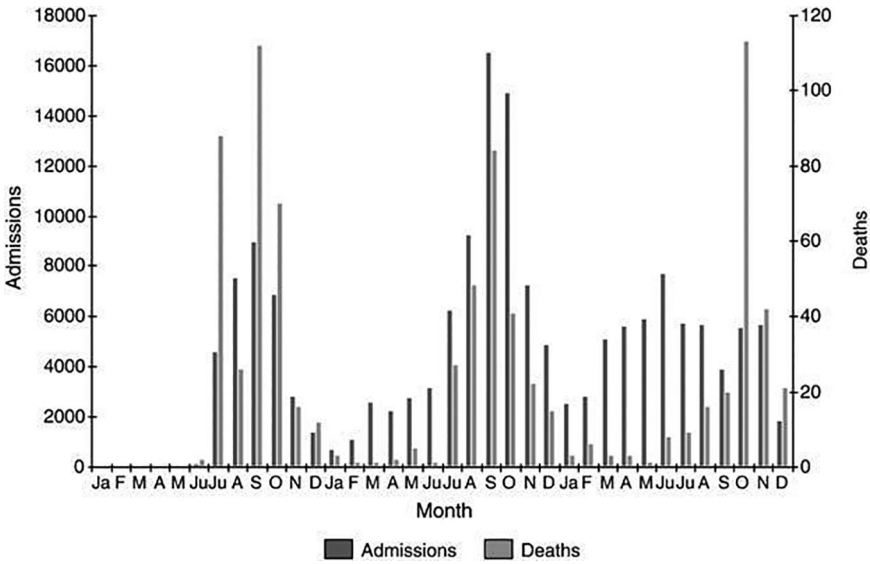

Figure 9.1 Admissions to hospital and mortality, British troops, 1916–18.

the 'cerebral' and 'cardiac' cases that normally followed malignant tertian malaria, i.e., cases mostly likely caused by falciparum. It is possible that the septicaemic cases were due to an extremely heavy infection with vivax.

If vivax was responsible for many of the deaths attributed to falciparum malaria this has important implications for current debates over malaria and its control. Evidence from the Salonika campaign appears to support recent critiques (e.g. Baird 2013) of anti-malaria policy for consistently underestimating the severity of vivax malaria in favour of an overwhelming concentration on falciparum. This has major implications because vivax is the dominant species of malaria everywhere apart from Africa, which receives nearly all the funding and publicity when it comes to malaria control. The epidemiological patterns outlined above should also lead us to question certain assumptions about the relative efficacy of anti-malaria control in the different armies. In particular, it is often claimed that the French had more success in preventing cases of malaria than the British. This claim was first made by medical officers of the Army of the Orient and has been repeated over the years (the French work is cited in Wenyon 1921: 108). The apparent success of the French is usually attributed to a more concerted and coordinated effort to control malaria from 1917 – known as the *mission antipaludique* – undertaken in response to public concern over high rates of malaria in the Army of the Orient the previous year. One aspect of this campaign was intensive propaganda at home and at the front (see Figure 9.2), much of which was designed to ensure the compliance of troops with

Figure 9.2 French anti-malaria propaganda.
Source: Chromolithograph by A. Guillaume, with the kind permission of the Wellcome Collection, CC BY.

orders to take regular doses of quinine. The *mission* also stepped up other measures including the control of mosquito vectors and the treatment and evacuation of infected troops. Indeed, an article by Migliani et al. (2014: 349–61) suggests that the performance of the French army in malaria control not only outshone the British but allowed it to gain victory over Bulgarian forces in 1918.

There are several reasons to be sceptical of these claims. Most importantly, the decline in malaria may have been much less dramatic than first appears and it is distinctly possible that its incidence may not have declined at all. A note of caution was first sounded by the British medical officer C.W. Wenyon in 1921, in his reflections on malaria in the Salonika campaign. He thought it impossible that the French could have reduced the incidence of malaria by as much as 90% between 1916 and 1917 and noticed that their figures were based solely on supposed primary cases rather than relapses or re-infection. Information about frequency of infection or relapse was obtained from interviews with soldiers presenting for treatment; a method that had been abandoned by the British Army because of its unreliability (Wenyon 1921: 108). Even if we allow that that some reduction in malaria took place, comparisons of British and French achievements fail to take account of the location of their respective forces. From late 1916, the British 26th Corps was located predominantly in the Struma Valley and in fixed positions on the Doiran front, both of which were notoriously malarious.

French forces were mostly located on higher and dryer ground; still malarious but with probably lower transmission. The importance of location is also illustrated by the very different malaria mortality profiles of British forces in 1916 and in subsequent years. As mentioned earlier, a good deal of mortality in 1916 occurred during the summer (coincident with relapses of vivax). In subsequent years, there was far less mortality in the summer, although some primary infection did occur in July and August.[1] The vast majority of new infections (vivax and falciparum) and deaths in 1917 and 1918 occurred in the autumn. September and October were the peak months, with the number of admissions to hospital rising to 4,507 in the week ending 6 October, in 1917, for example. In the words of Col. M.P. Holt, the Director of Medical Services for Salonika, the number of admissions from malaria at this time showed a 'marked increase compared with October 1916'.[2] This shows the great difference that a change in position could make and it seems reasonable to suppose that being located in very different environments might similarly account for the two armies' different experiences of malaria.

The second reason to be sceptical of existing explanations of higher mortality in the British force is that most of the anti-malarial methods used by the French differed little from those of the British. They were of basically of three kinds: (i) personal protection (e.g. anti-mosquito ointments, bed-nets, gloves and other protective clothing); (ii) prophylaxis with the drug quinine; and (iii) measures to control mosquitoes, particularly anti-larval measures. The French are said to have organised all of these things more effectively. For example, Brabin (2014: 8) attributes the relative success of the French to 'improved efforts at quinine prophylaxis of troops, and rapid evacuation of infected troops'. While they do not single out any particular measure, Migliani et al. (2014: 359) also emphasise the superiority of French malaria control, attributing it to France's long experience of countering malaria in Algeria and other colonies but ignoring the fact that the British had a similar depth of experience in India, Malaya and other tropical colonies.

Let us examine some of these claims more closely. First, there is the issue of quinine prophylaxis. The French appear to have believed in the efficacy of this method longer than the British but was their faith justified? By 1917, British medical officers in Salonika were unanimous that quinine prophylaxis did not work as well as they expected and some believed that it had failed completely. Initially, its shortcomings were attributed to the fact that troops –who mostly disliked quinine because of its bitter taste and tendency to induce nausea and occasionally serious side effects such as tinnitus – did their best to avoid consuming it.[3] However, anti-malaria discipline in most units was strict and the routine use of quinine parades, in which men were forced to drink quinine in solution in front of officers or NCOs (see Figure 9.3) led most medical officers to believe that the failure of prophylaxis was due to the limitations of quinine rather than lack of discipline. Even the use of higher doses (10, 20 or even 30 grains per day rather than the normal amount of 5 or 6) had no effect, despite being equivalent to a

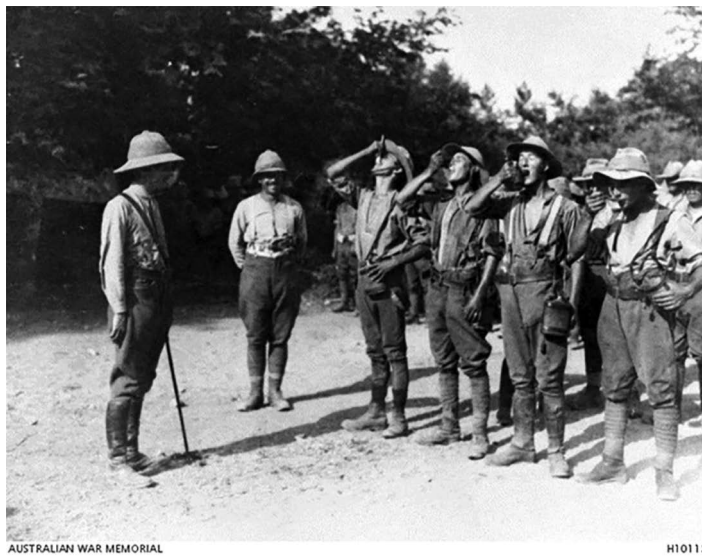

Figure 9.3 Salonika, c. 1918. British Army soldiers on parade for their daily dose of quinine.
Source: British Official Photograph SAL591 (Downloaded with gratitude from the Australian War Memorial, public domain).

full therapeutic dose. Indeed, some medical officers speculated whether the parasite had developed resistance to the drug because it was so freely used (Hamilton 1921: 365). This is one of the first references to the phenomenon of drug resistance in the case of malaria; a problem that has subsequently dogged its treatment and prophylaxis.

Quinine prophylaxis was not abandoned, however, because some officers believed that without it the situation would have been even worse; this was also the opinion of the renowned malaria scientist S.R. Christophers (1939: 284) when speaking in 1939 about malaria in the Salonika campaign. Nevertheless, in 1917, the majority of British medical officers and also the Medical Research Council concluded that more emphasis needed to be placed on other measures.[4] It was generally recognised that quinine prophylaxis had some benefit, even though it was far less than expected (Wenyon 1921: 102–3). With hindsight, we can say that this judgement was correct; at least in the case of the most prevalent form of malaria in the Salonika theatre – vivax. This parasite spends most of its life in the human host lying dormant in the liver and, during this time, quinine – which acts on parasites when in the bloodstream – is unable to kill them. This was not known until some years after the war, but it suggests that there is little reason to attribute the apparently dramatic success of the French to their use of quinine (Willoughby and Cassidy 1918: 51–4).

The perceived failure of quinine prophylaxis in Salonika had consequences for malaria control not only in that theatre but also in others in

which the British Army encountered the disease. In 1917, in Palestine, for example, General Allenby implemented extensive vector control measures rather than relying on quinine. This kept the number of malaria cases very low until the army had to advance through parts of the Jordan Valley that had been occupied by the Turks (Harrison 2010: 254–9). In Salonika itself, vector control within and outside encampments was stepped up in 1917 and was undertaken even more vigorously the following year. By the end of the war, 479,991 yards of new trenches had been cut to assist drainage; 1,670,506 yards of new trenches had been dug; 9,690 pools of water had been drained or filled in; 1,157,192 square yards of water had been oiled, to kill mosquito larvae; and 363,315 square yards of brushwood had been cut, to remove mosquito breeding places (Christophers 1939: 284). The area around the Salonika base saw the most intensive activity initially, with extensive drainage works and canalisation of ravines to prevent mosquitoes from breeding on the edges of streams or in the slack water around weeds.[5] This resulted in some substantial environmental improvements (see Figure 9.4) which are likely to have had some effect on the mosquito population.

Figure 9.4 Stream near Salonika Base, before and after canalisation: work carried out by the Royal Engineers under the Works Directorate, App.63: Preventive Measures against Malaria.

Source: WO 95/4782, TNA.

However, such works were manpower intensive and were seldom practicable near the front. In their 1918 report on anti-malaria work in Macedonia, the British medical officers Willoughby and Cassidy (1918: 40–50, 67) concluded that the magnitude and expense of work necessary to drain swamps and render the shores of many lakes free from malaria was prohibitive. Nevertheless, they concluded that breeding sites could be removed from streams by enabling them to flow more freely. These measures were practicable in certain localities only and the real need was to render much larger areas safe. This required the use of civilian labour where possible.

In these respects, there was little difference between the measures taken by the British and the French, and both faced the same difficulties, recognising that they lacked the manpower to conduct vector control outside of core areas. For these reasons, they cooperated in attempts to organise civilian labour on drainage works along the Monastir Road, which began in 1917.[6] However, there may have been some difference for a while in the protection afforded to troops of these armies by their accommodation. It was noticed that the two-man bivouacs that were used by British troops in many forward areas gave little protection against mosquitoes compared to those of French design, which had gauze-covered ventilation holes. British tents were poorly ventilated so many troops were tempted to open the flaps to allow air and, inevitably, mosquitoes into the tent. Many tents were also damaged and were replaced slowly. By 1918, however, more British tents had been fitted with gauze to allow ventilation, many buildings had been screened and light mosquito-proof huts had been supplied. Mosquito nets remained in short supply throughout the campaign and even where they were available their issue was sometimes delayed. However, the British may have been better supplied in this respect than the French and the mosquito-proofing of buildings was apparently more common in the case of the British (Wenyon 1921: 107).

The French may also initially have had the edge over the British in anti-malarial education. This seems to have been organised more effectively in the French Army than in the British, as a report submitted at the end of 1916 admitted (Whitehead Report). Senior combatant officers appeared to lack knowledge of malaria and after the British moved into the Struma Valley, the Director of Medical Services, Surgeon-General Whitehead, claimed that he had unsuccessfully urged the General Staff to relocate as many troops as possible to higher ground as the area close to the river was intensely malarious. However, he acknowledged that nothing had been gained from such tactics in the Vardar Valley, where mosquitoes bred in mountain streams (Whitehead Report). Some medical staff also complained of the failure of senior medical officers to share intelligence. As a result, they sometimes had poor knowledge of the risks associated with certain locations, even though these were well known to specialists.[7]

Regardless of the attitudes of commanders and medics, it is unlikely that troops had much confidence in the instructions they were given. Mosquitoes were simply too pervasive for vector control to make much of an impact

in forward areas, especially since flying distances could range for nearly a mile.[8] Similarly, actions such as leaving tent flaps open at night may not have been the result of deficient education but a belief that infection would occur anyway and that a more comfortable night's sleep was worth the risk. Protective clothing such as gloves and netted headgear was also impracticable when handling arms and equipment. As one British medical officer put it, 'on active service, in a country like Salonika, it is utterly impossible, in the firing line, to thoroughly carry out all preventive measures against malaria' (Hamilton 1921: 369). The situation presumably would have been similar in all armies; indeed, medical officers in other theatres also found nets of various kinds to be of little use in the field (Gill 1917: 454). It therefore seems unlikely that education and variations in mechanical prophylaxis could explain large differences in sickness and mortality rates, if such actually existed. Indeed, from 1917, any differences between the French and British would have narrowed as there were major efforts to improve anti-malaria education in the British Army in that year. Instruction classes were provided not only for medical staff but also for combatant officers (Whitehead Report).

Another advantage that the French are said to have enjoyed over the British was better facilities for evacuation. In the British Army, forward medical units such as Regimental Aid Posts (RAPs) and Advanced Dressing Stations were choked with casualties in the malaria season. Sometimes RAPs were forced to deal with 200 or more cases of malaria at a time. Despite ambulance cars making 4–5 trips a day to advanced dressing stations, the number of malaria casualties during peak transmission season (in autumn) or during the peak time for the relapse of vivax cases (in summer) was simply too high to allow them to be evacuated. Another problem was that Army commanders refused to send larger hospitals such as Casualty Clearing Stations –the mainstay of forward treatment in France and Flanders – closer to where they were needed. On top of this, the number of motor ambulances and other forms of transport was insufficient and in many cases broken down vehicles were not replaced.[9] In August 1917, the Director of Medical Services began to state that it was far better for the sickest men to be evacuated down the line than be retained in Regimental Aid Posts. Later that year and more obviously in 1918, evacuation became more feasible as a result of better communications (Gaskell and Millar 1920: 382). Many of the casualties that were taken to stationary hospitals in the major cities responded well to treatment with quinine, which was given intravenously in the most serious cases. Case mortality in most hospitals was generally well below 1% (e.g. Falconer and Anderson 1917: 610).

The biggest difference between British and French evacuation schemes was the latter's willingness to send large numbers of men out of the theatre in 1917, whereas the British were reluctant to do that after the move to unrestricted submarine warfare. The retention of large numbers of infected men in the theatre added to the human reservoir of malaria and this helps to

account for the exceptionally large number of malaria cases recorded that year among British troops (some 70,000). As many were still infected at the beginning of 1918, the War Office decided to permit large-scale evacuation of the sick, known as the 'Y' Scheme. In Salonika, careful inspection was made of all troops and those in hospital in an effort to determine their malaria history and physical condition, with a view to weeding out those who were badly infected. These men were evacuated via the newly opened overland route via Itea and Taranto. The scheme had a marked effect on malaria admissions and the number of cases in the autumn was far lower than the previous year. Rather than 3,000–5,000 reporting sick per week as at the height of the malaria season in 1917, the numbers varied between 1,000 and 1,600 week.[10] It was later estimated that if the 25,000 men evacuated under the scheme had remained in Salonika, they would have contributed 50–60,000 admissions to hospital (Gardikas 2018: 231). It would therefore seem that the British had closed the gap with the French by 1918.

My conclusions from this survey of malaria in the Salonika campaign are as follows. Firstly, there is good reason to doubt some of the claims made about the relative efficacy of anti-malaria measures in the British and French armies. Although the French appear initially to have enjoyed an advantage in terms of evacuation out of Salonika (up to the end of 1917), which reduced the pool of infection, there is no conclusive evidence that they were any better at reducing the risks of infection in the theatre itself. Secondly, differential morbidity and mortality can be explained more easily by the risks of the locations in which the armies served. The mortality profile of the British Army in 1916 and 1917 shows how significant differences in location could be because it changed greatly after troops were moved nearer to the front. Thirdly, it seems likely that the perceived differences between British and French forces have been exaggerated, as the latter used a methodology that was deeply flawed. Fourthly, the mortality profile of the British Army provides evidence for the potential lethality of vivax infections; particularly the data for 1916, which shows that many deaths from malaria occurred in the summer as a result of relapsing cases. This has important implications for contemporary debates over malaria control because the lethality of vivax had been consistently underestimated.

Notes

1 Director of Medical Services (DMS), Salonika Force, War Diary, 17 August 1917, WO 95/4774, The National Archives [hereafter TNA].
2 DMS, Salonika Force, War Diary, 6 October 1917 and 'Report on Health of Troops during the Month of October 1917', WO 95, 4775, TNA.
3 This was a recurring problem: see Shanks 2016: 269–72.
4 MRC Report on Malaria in Salonika, 9 June 1917; Ronald Ross to Sir Alfred Keogh, DGAMS, 29 February 1916, WO 32/5112, TNA.
5 Salonika: Work carried out by the Royal Engineers under the Works Directorate, App.63: Preventive Measures against Malaria, Salonika Base Area: Work carried out by the Royal Engineers, WO 95/4782, TNA.

6 Surgeon-General Whitehead, DMS Salonika, '(Secret) Report on the Incidence of Malaria in the Salonika Army in 1916; On the Measures Taken for its Prevention; and on the Measures Proposed for its Prevention in 1917', WO 32/5112, TNA. Hereafter: Whitehead Report.
7 Papers of Capt. M.S. Esler, 74/102/1, p. 49, T, IWM.
8 Letter from P.H. Henderson to 'Lothian', 14 August 1918, RAMC 761/1/13, Wellcome Library, London.
9 Fairbank 1915–18: 42–53. For hospital provision more generally, see Wakefield and Moody 2004: 165–82.
10 DMS Salonika Army, September–October 1917, WO 95/4775; DMS Salonika Army, September–October 1918, WO 95/4778, TNA.

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10 'New Cotton and the dust of ages'

Nursing in and around Salonika from 1915 to 1918

Christine E. Hallett

Introduction

The Macedonia Front has become one of the 'forgotten fronts' of World War I, a 'sideshow', whose significance has been eclipsed in western European memory by the Western Front and the Gallipoli Campaign (Wilson 1986: 377; Strachan 2006: 154; Sondhaus 2011: 224–8). As a battle-front, it was largely quiescent until the campaign of 1916, in which tens of thousands of British soldiers supported an offensive led by French commander, Maurice Sarrail, designed both to support Romania and to bring Greece into the war on the allied side. Not only did the British and Dominion forces, who joined the wider allied campaign meet with fierce opposition from the Bulgars, they also found themselves fighting over harsh, rocky terrain, and bivouacking in mosquito-infested river valleys (Wilson 1986: 495).

Staff in military hospitals located in and around the allied base of Salonika cared for wounded and sick men returning from this front. Among the most intractable problems they faced were the injuries caused by industrial weaponry, the debility created by exposure to the harsh Balkan climate, and a succession of severe infectious diseases among which the most intractable and damaging were dysentery and malaria. Mark Harrison has observed that, prior to the war, medical experts in the British Army had been 'embroiled in a bitter dispute' over the prevention of malaria, some recommending quinine prophylaxis, others stressing the need to destroy mosquitoes in the regions where troops were encamped (Harrison 2010: 229 and see Harrison's chapter in this volume). When troops were stationed in the heavily infested valleys of the Struma and Vardar north of Salonika, these disputes had still not been resolved. Men were at risk from several strains of the disease, among which was the intractable *Plasmodium falciparum*, against which quinine treatment was largely ineffective. In their *History of the Great War Based on Official Documents,* Mitchell and Smith (1931: 194) found that in Salonika 'non-battle casualties exceeded battle casualties in the proportion of twenty to one for all ranks', further observing that 'the average annual ratio per 1,000 for malaria alone was higher than the ratio per 1,000 for all diseases admitted to hospital from troops stationed in the

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United Kingdom for the years 1914–1918'. The problem of how to prevent malaria remained unresolved throughout the Macedonia campaign, giving rise to serious concern about attrition from the disease, and prompting questions in parliament (Harrison 2010: 234–5).

Base-hospitals at the port of Salonika, and stationary hospitals outside the city in locations such as the plain of Hortiach, were staffed by three distinct types of nurses: fully trained professionals, some of whom were 'regular' members of their army nursing services; volunteer-nurses from so-called 'Voluntary Aid Detachments' (known as 'VADs'); and medical orderlies, who were army-trained and had their own lines of command. These three groups worked together, alongside medical officers, treating wounds, implementing complex medical regimens and offering fundamental nursing care (Piggott 1975; Rae 2009; Harris 2011: 66; Hallett 2014: 153–8; Toman 2017).

Writing nursing

Nursing practice in bases such as Salonika was sometimes characterised by tensions between trained and untrained nurses. In general, professionally trained nurses were recognised as being in charge of the wards and volunteer-nurses and orderlies were expected to follow their direction. Yet there was no single clear line of command for the nursing service, and orderlies could choose to ignore sisters' instructions (though, in practice, they did so only rarely). There were also some tensions between professional nurses and semi-trained volunteers because the presence of the VADs undermined the profession's campaign for self-regulation and a closed register – a campaign that had been active since 1887 (Hallett 2013: 87–102, 2014: 18–20). One VAD, Vivian Ross commented in her diary that one of the sisters she had been placed with had been 'icy' in her manner and that trained staff were generally refusing to allow VADs to perform 'responsible' work such as the giving of medications or the taking of temperatures; all such work was given to the orderlies, while the VADS scrubbed lockers and swept ward floors (Ross, Diary, undated) (Figure 10.1).

The work of all nursing staff on the Macedonia Front was onerous and time-consuming. Many patients were severely debilitated by a combination of injury and disease, some suffering concurrently from wounds, dysentery and malaria. Many were emaciated, incapacitated and completely helpless, requiring total care: feeding, washing and toileting, along with frequent turning and repositioning to prevent pressure ulcers (Hallett 2009: 131–2, 2014: 153–8).

Salonika was, therefore, a very challenging experience for nurses. Some commented on how forgotten and sidelined the Macedonia Front was, believing that the resourcing of hospitals was poorer here than on other fronts and that the skill and dedication of professional nurses went largely unrecognised. Others appear to have relished the challenges of eastern Mediterranean postings such as Salonika, viewing them through the lens of a classical

Figure 10.1 Dorothy Vivian Ross, VAD (Voluntary Aid Detachment) nurse in Salonika, 1916–17.
Source: courtesy of Michael Llewellyn-Smith.

education as transformative personal 'trials' or 'ordeals'. Among the most notable of these were professional Australian nurse Christine Erica Strom, VAD Vivian Ross, and medical orderly Stanley Spencer, who, when he enlisted for war, already had a reputation as a talented artist. These resonant voices, among others, paint a vivid, almost dreamlike image of a harshly beautiful landscape in which patients and staff join forces in an almost surreal battle against the spectres of disease and injury. These diarists appear to have carried with them a sense that they were living through a significant human drama, over a terrain which had formed the backdrop for other, ancient and mythical dramas.

Other nurses' personal writings focussed more on the practicalities of work in Salonika, commenting that the harshness of the terrain and climate, along with the extremely poor resourcing of the hospitals meant that patients suffered needlessly. Laura Gamble, a Canadian professional nurse based at the No. 4 Canadian General Hospital, commented, 'we surely saw active service at its worst', adding that in November 1915, her hospital saw an 'influx' of 1300 patients: 'They were mostly men from Serbia, suffering

Figure 10.2 Staff Nurse Christine Erica Strom, 1892–1984.
Source: Australian War Memorial photograph PO4397.001.

from frost-bite – They slept in Marquees – on straw and stretchers and were thankful to go anywhere where they could get shelter. The misery of the men was terrible' (Gamble, Diary, Canada's Nursing Sisters, Library and Archives Canada, online resource; see also Toman 2017) (Figure 10.2).

Christine Strom was one of a group of so-called 'Victorian nurses' – from the Australian state of Victoria – whose ship, the *Mooltan,* left Melbourne in the early summer of 1917 (Strom, Letters, AWM41, 1068). Following a brief period in Egypt, Strom's contingent of nurses was posted to the No. 66 General Hospital about 12 miles from the port of Salonika. The nurses took stock of their new destination. Strom wrote of how 'chaotic' the hospital site was when the nurses arrived on 31 July 1917. There were no floor coverings and the ground was 'covered with prickles, mingled cheerfully with dust' (Strom, Letter dated 31–07–17, AWM p. 12). It was several days before the nurses could unpack their own belongings. Strom was beginning to discover how harsh the Salonika climate could be:

> The evenings and mornings are beautiful, but the nights are surprisingly cold; at least so it seemed to us last night! We were given many

> blankets each… The beds were made in the simplest possible manner; each girl laid her stock of blankets on the top of her ground sheet, heaped everything else available on top, and crawled in amongst it all. At first thoughts one would say 'And a very cosy bed too!' but, alas, it was nothing of the sort. The ground of Greece is astonishingly hard and stony, there are prickles and knobby bits of roots, there are lumps of clay. One girl even included a tortoise as part of her share of the earth! And cold! It was freezing.
>
> (Strom, Letter dated 31–07–17, AWM, pp. 12–14; see also Hallett 2009: 131, 2014: 154)

Strom described the disarray within her ward at No. 66. Although stretcher-beds had been set out in neat rows, and lockers placed carefully between them, the ward was a 'complicated system of hills and valleys' making the lockers 'wobble about all over the place'. Strom's descriptions are redolent of the camp atmosphere of the hospital:

> Everything smells; the tent is of new canvas, and the sun, beating down upon it, brings it all out. The tarpaulin has a shoppy, tarry smell like roasted linoleum. The mosquito nets have a delightful fragrance all their own; it is a judicious blend of new cotton and the dust of ages. We breathe it ourselves every night.
>
> (Strom, Letter dated 3–08–17, AWM, p. 15; Hallett 2009: 131)

Most of the patients cared-for by nurses at Salonika were very seriously ill. One Australian nurse, who later wrote a narrative as 'Sister Jeffries', served on a hospital ship, conveying sick Serbian soldiers away from the Salonika base to Malta and Tunis. She commented that

> never in all my experiences on Active Service [had I] had such sick men to nurse. On the voyage from Salonica to Tunis (4 days) 40 of them died. There was a varied opinion as to what disease they were suffering from, but the general opinion was that it was Typhus.
>
> (Jeffries, Narrative, AWM41/984)

'Sister Wray', based in various hospitals around 'Base Salonica' during 1917 and 1918, wrote of the prevalence of bronchitis and influenza, particularly during the winter months (Wray, Narrative, AWM41/1062). Nurses commented on the complexity of some of the medical regimens they were expected to implement. Dysentery was treated with a combination of bismuth and chlorodyne, with castor oil to counter their side effects. VAD Vivian Ross experienced this treatment at first hand, when she herself contracted dysentery, finding that the treatments yielded the most unpleasant symptoms – though she did not reveal what these were (Ross, Diary, undated). Malaria was treated with quinine; although, where possible, careful

attention was also paid to providing a nutritious diet, to build the patient's strength.

The fight against malaria

Malaria was one of the most intractable problems for medical and nursing staff at Salonika. Christine Strom found that, as a nurse on night duty, her mornings were dominated by the need to tidy and arrange the mosquito nets in each of the five wards she patrolled: 'Each must be drooped just so, and tucked in under the mattress in the exact and correct manner' (Strom, Letter dated 3/08/17, AWM, p.18).

Much of the nurses' work involved caring for young men with malaria. The only really effective treatment was quinine, and even this was only fully active against certain strains of *Plasmodium.* Yet, both medical and nursing staff knew that one of the most important ways to combat infection in the human body was to build both physical and emotional resilience. Although immunology was still a nascent discipline in the second decade of the twentieth century, staff had found by trial and error that good nutrition and hydration, accompanied by adequate rest and sleep would go a long way towards both enabling the body to heal and raising the morale. The close monitoring of patients' progress enabled the calibration of their treatments. Christine Strom wrote of the anxiety of caring for such very sick men as the only trained nurse on a night shift, responsible for about 100 patients:

> Making observations in the wards, when the boys all sleep under mosquito nets, is some job. It is necessary to go right up to the net to ascertain the degree of welfare of the recumbent form within. Sometimes there am I, gazing through the net, the lantern smothered up as much as possible, and a quiet chuckle will come from the unsleeping one inside, as he watches my anxious, peering, countenance on the outside! Sometimes a jocular soul will suddenly say 'Boo!' when I peep through… My orderly is a gem. He has friends in the high places – ie. The cook house and other important establishments – a way with him, and several tins, which we hide carefully from the day staff, to keep the spoils.
>
> (Strom, Letter dated 19/09/17, AWM; Hallett 2009: 136)

Strom's account of her work with her 'gem' of an orderly illustrates how well different grades and types of nurses could cooperate. It also offers a clear insight into the cultural capital which was won through courage, a sense of humour and the ability to 'banter', even in circumstances of hardship and distress.

The costs of caring

Nurses at the general hospitals outside Salonika worked long hours. At General Hospital No. 66 they woke at 5 am and walked to the bathhouse

for what Strom (Letter dated 19/09/17, AWM) referred to as their 'morning splash'. Breakfast was at 6.30; duty began at 7. Half the nurses had a break between 1.30 pm and 5 pm, then went on duty again until 7.30 pm. The remainder stayed on duty right through until 5 pm, then had afternoon tea, followed rapidly by a 7 pm dinner. 'Lights out' was at 9 pm, leaving the nurses with very little free time. Night duty was from 7 pm to 7 am. During their long hours, nurses were frequently engaged in heavy, physical work, and were exposed to a range of infectious diseases.

Another Australian nurse, Laura Appleton, commented on the harshness of the conditions at Salonika:

> The climate in Salonika was most trying – I was in a dysentery hospital almost all the time. We worked very hard. The work would have been interesting if we had had a little less of it and a few more conveniences. Hospital equipment was very bad and we had no comforts at all. The camp equipment which we were to be supplied with arrived a few weeks before we left Salonika. Malaria was very bad, for our Hospital was situated on the side of a ravine that was infested with the dangerous insect. Our food would have been very poor if it had not been for the Australian Red Cross. We were pleased to leave there.
>
> (Appleton, Narrative, AWM41/939)

Working as they were under such conditions, it is not surprising that many nurses themselves became ill. VAD Vivian Ross, believed that the large amount of sickness among her own colleagues within their first month of landing at Salonika, might have been due to the unhygienic conditions onboard their transport vessel, the hospital ship *Grantully Castle*. She referred to it as a 'very dirty, smelly boat', and commented that the nurses had slept in 'uncarbolised cots' (Ross, Diary, undated). In November 1916, she recorded in her diary that she had caught 'a slight chill' after being drenched during a severe rainstorm. 'The mud is so chilly' she commented (Ross, Diary, undated). Within a few days, Ross was admitted to the 'Sick Sisters' Ward' with severe dysentery and a temperature of 104 Fahrenheit. She wrote in her diary of her fellow-patients:

> Sister [illeg.]… was moved into the next bed to me. She has malaria, and is very ill – such a little dear! Next her is Sister Daubeney, recovering from para-typhoid, thrombosis in both legs! She was invalided home to England in Nov. then came Sister McCarthy, in with boils – she was taken on the staff of the S.S.Q.s as soon as she was well enough. Then came sister Shareman, with malaria from the 38th. She was quite interesting when she was better, and recovered her talking powers… but when she was ill, the 60 grains of quinine used to make her retch all night long!
>
> (Ross, Diary, undated).

Following her recovery, Ross was taken on as a nurse in the Sick Sisters' Quarters; the immunity built up during her own illness clearly being seen as a qualification for her new role. The healing of clinicians who had fallen ill in the course of their work was given high priority. In December 1916, food was in short supply and rations were cut, so that most staff had 'meat only every other day, no potatoes, few vegetables'. But, in the Sick Sisters Quarters, full rations were permitted, and, because so many patients had no appetite and refused food, the staff there found 'extra rations' being forced on them: 'bread and butter galore!' (Ross, Diary, undated).

British medical orderly Stanley Spencer wrote in his letters of his own bouts of illness while on active service in Salonika. On 25 March 1917, he told his sister Florence that he had been in hospital with 'bronchitis', although he reassured her that it was really only 'nasal catarrh' (Spencer 2001: 82, 2016: 259). Much later, he wrote of being hospitalised with malaria: 'I feel depressed and long for something nice: to do some fine paintings or to read some fine literature or hear grand music … I feel as weak as a kitten' (Spencer 2001: 96, 2016: 345–6).

An emotional and spiritual battlefield

Nurses struggled to sustain their own morale. One British VAD, whose diary is preserved at the Imperial War Museum, London, wrote of how distressing it was to hear tales of suffering:

> In the ravine the wounded, as they were hit, rolled down the sides of the hill into the water and were drowned by the hundred; they tell us that the Pass was packed with dead and wounded and nothing could be done to save the latter from the packs of wild dogs who eat them… Oh, it makes one creep to hear the tales they tell of the lads who die up there. Out of 500, sometimes they have only about 95 men – all the rest are down here with Malaria. What a country to send troops to. When will the war end?
>
> (Moor, Diary; Hallett 2009: 168)

Stanley Spencer described from first-hand experience what it was like close to the front lines, referring in his notebook to how the dogs 'moaned and did a kind of yelping or barking, sort of rer-rer-a-rer-rer-arr-a-rer-rer etc'. Earlier, he had commented in the same notebook on 'the wolfish dogs' symposiums at night', adding that, for him 'it was not a landscape, it was a spiritual world'. In this sense, he appears to have been viewing the elemental nature of the Macedonia Front as something to be wondered at. But he then refers to his own thoughts as 'romantic pictures in my bed pan fetching mind. Impossible romanticising' (Spencer 2001: 77–8, 82, 2016: 233–6). Later, in a letter to his sister, he commented: 'in some ways I like the merciless wildness

of this country. It makes one curse at times, but the cursing is a very fitting part of the "wildness". It's just like being in Purgatory' (Spencer 2001: 91, 2016: 303) (Figure 10.3).

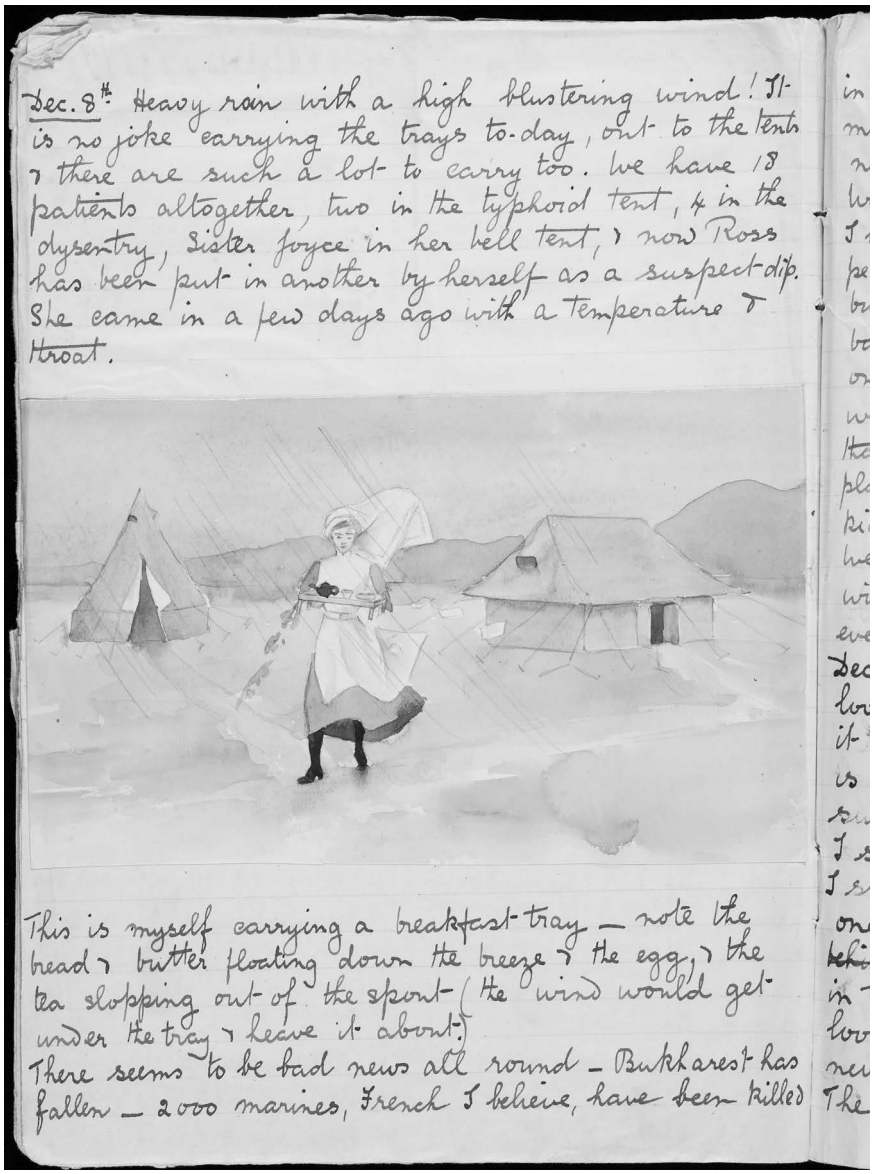

Figure 10.3 Pen and ink sketch by Dorothy Vivian Ross, from her Salonika diary.
Source: Brotherton Library, Leeds.

Coping with extremes of temperature was one of the most trying elements of life in northern Greece. Australian staff nurse Lucy Armstrong (Narrative, AWM41/941) described how:

> We landed in Greece in August 1917 – the summer time is really very dusty and hot… Hortiach was the summer camp it being too cold to stay in winter. The blizzards, Vardaar [sic] winds and snow made it quite impossible for a tent camp to remain without tragic results.

The work and conditions at Salonika were among the hardest faced by the nurses of the time – surpassed, perhaps, only by the inhospitable terrain of the island of Lemnos.[1] Yet, nurses' diaries also attest to the fantastic and almost dreamlike beauty of northern Greece, which appears to have raised their morale and encouraged them to view their experiences as part of an elemental struggle. Vivian Ross (Diary, undated) commented on the 'most enchanting high-prowed boats' moored to the quay in Salonika. She also wrote of her first sighting of Mount Olympus:

> This mysterious, wonderful mountain in the middle of a glorious sunset. And I had watched across the bay, thinking how pretty it was, and dreaming that the seat of the Gods was there!
>
> (Ross, Diary, undated)

Stanley Spencer wrote in his notebook of his feelings as his hospital ship, the *Llandovery Castle,* arrived in the gulf of Salonika, in September 1916:

> I liked the feeling that the darkness, that seemed to have a reddish glow, had a Bulgarian feeling in it. Some man had just arrived from some sector. If he had been Hermes straight from Olympus with a message from Zeus I should not have felt more moved… It began in me a course of longing for something findable in that country, which lasted for the two and a half years that I was there and for years after. It became the goal and place wherein spiritually I was wanting to find the redeeming and delivering of myself in all the activities [the] unexpressed me had lived through and in.
>
> (Spencer 2001: 76–7, 2016: 231–2)

In 1932, long after the Armistice, Stanley Spencer completed his artistic masterpiece: a series of seventeen murals around the walls of the Sandham Memorial Church in Hampshire. Behind the altar is a Resurrection scene, in which British soldiers lay their grave-markers at Christ's feet. Commenting in his notebook, Spencer (2016: 362) stated that 'in this scheme, as in all my painting, I wish always to stress my own redemption for all that I have been made to suffer'.

Christine Strom's philosophical consolations were, perhaps, more immediate. In the summer of 1917, her five wards were high up above several

Figure 10.4 Field Marshal Milne inspecting VADs after the war.
Source: IWM (HU 86970).

camps: vulnerable to the unpredictable northern Greek weather, but with a wide and spectacular view (Figure 10.4):

> The nights are very lovely. The moon is just over the full now, rising tonight two thirds of a golden ball, but the moonlight nights were a glory. The mountains stand out mistily apparent, their quiet old heads silhouetted against the clear sky… There is something wonderfully peaceful about the moonlit, sleeping camp, with its long lines of marquees… Somehow over all of them, on these moonlit nights, there seems to hang an atmosphere of serene hopefulness, and quiet peace; it is the atmosphere of perpetual benediction. Alas! That the daylight blinds the eye!
>
> (Strom, Letter dated 19/09/17, AWM)

Conclusion

The physical and emotional pressures experienced by nurses based in and around Salonika – who saw their primary duty as that of caring for men who could not care for themselves – are apparent in their writings. These writings open a window onto the distress experienced by nurses of all types.

Men were being brought back to their tented Salonika hospitals with a range of injuries caused by industrial warfare: single bullet wounds caused by sniper-fire; multiple wounds caused by machine-guns; shrapnel injuries, which, if inflicted by pieces of shell-casing, could be enormous; and blast injuries, which were not so often seen in hospital – their recipients often dying long before they could reach the base. These men were often in terrible conditions – emaciated through lack of decent food and water and severely enervated by the extreme dry heat in summer and the deep cold of winter. And because the conditions on the Macedonia Front were so awful, nurses in Salonika found that wounds were not their most intractable problems. Men were being brought to their damp, cold, canvas wards with a range of very serious illnesses, ranging from airborne infections such as influenza and scarlet fever, through serious epidemic gastrointestinal diseases, such as dysentery and typhoid (with the occasional cholera case) and vector-borne diseases, such as typhus fever, carried by lice, and malaria, transmitted by mosquitoes – both extremely difficult to avoid. Malaria and dysentery were particularly rife, and nurses often found themselves posted to large hospital wards in which all of their patients were suffering from one or other (or, at times, both) of these diseases.

Nurses, VADs and orderlies express a range of emotions in their personal diaries. Alongside the horror of witnessing, they also expressed a sense of redemption or wonderment, not only at the harsh beauty of the northern Greek landscape but also at the almost elemental struggle in which they believed they were engaged.

Note

1 Lemnos, which became Greek during the Balkan Wars, is the Aegean island with the finest natural harbour, Mudros. It served as the mustering point for the allied fleets during the Gallipoli campaign, and along with hospitals in and around Salonika it continued throughout the Macedonia campaign to serve allied needs on a reduced scale, e.g., for the rest and recovery of the sick.

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11 Mediterranean Jews and the politics of contraband trade in World War I

Paris Papamichos Chronakis

This chapter examines a critical instance of the encounter between state and business interests during World War I, the constitution of black lists of firms trading with the enemy. With the economic blockade of the Central Powers in full force, contraband trade became a major concern leading to the establishment of a vast bureaucracy and an impressive information gathering mechanism with a truly global scope (Maisel 1989; McDermott 1989, 1997; García-Sanz 2014; Dehne 2016). This mechanism generated its own archive of documents, with its own truth protocols, fact-checking mechanism, but also fictions. Following the paper trail of several Jewish-owned firms from the Eastern Mediterranean port-city of Salonika, whose wartime transactions were scrutinized for evidence of contraband trade, I am therefore less concerned in establishing 'facts', in determining the 'real' extent and nature of Jewish smuggling. Rather, I focus on the way ethnicity, that is, Jewishness, and nationality were discursively produced by state authorities and Jewish businessmen themselves; and the way those businessmen strategically utilized their ethnicity and nationality to revoke their blacklisting. In the course of the war, Jewishness, I argue was politicized, but its plurality became both a liability as well as an asset.

Once the Ottoman Empire entered the war and closed the Dardanelles strait, Salonika became the 'hyphen between the West and the Orient' as the perceptive Belgian consul imaginatively described it.[1] Regaining its erstwhile position as the gateway to Central and Eastern Europe, the city turned into the centre of an extensive trading network spanning from the Ottoman Empire in the East, to Germany and Austria-Hungary in the North. Enticed by the large profits to be made, commercial agents from Romania, Germany, Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria settled in Salonika using 'all sorts of contraband operations and means of corruption to achieve their objectives'.[2] They bribed the local Greek officials to secure the majority of export permits and train wagons, and guided by the German consulate, partnered with recommended high-profile local brokers to purchase and ship via the neutral states of Bulgaria and Rumania large quantities of merchandise to Germany and Austria-Hungary.[3] Chief among those brokers was the city's major commissioner, Yaakov Isaac Molho, who by utilizing

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his complementary positions of ship-owner, representative of the Romanian Transport Company Viteza, and member of the municipal council and the Chamber of Commerce, virtually monopolized the transport of goods from Salonika to the neutral Bulgarian port of Dedeagatch.[4]

To stop this type of trade, the Entente resorted to various measures that continued to evolve until the end of the war. Chief among them were the black and statutory lists cataloguing all companies trading with the enemy worldwide. This daunting feat of information gathering and data processing comprised the establishment of new government branches and involved numerous agents, military as well as civilian, from postal censors to local consuls and from commercial attachés to generals. Global in scope, it blurred the boundaries between neutral and belligerent countries but also between enemies and allies. It was an exercise in global surveillance, and as such it was also a discourse-producing machine generating its own classifying categories in an attempt to pin down what constituted contraband trade and who was involved in it.

A great variety of criteria was applied to determine the blacklisting of a Salonikan firm. To begin with, given how extensive trade with the Central Powers was before the war, all local firms were by definition suspect of contraband activity no matter if their owners were mostly Jews steeped in French culture and holding Italian or other allied citizenship.[5] Continuing such trade during the first two years of the war, while Greece remained neutral, was the first thing the consuls noted in their reports. Other factors however, often irrelevant to business, could also weigh in. In fact, links to Germany were discovered in the most unimaginable places. To spread 'the most pessimistic rumours on the future of Salonika' under Greek rule, as Haim and Albert Benveniste did, translated into 'being a known Germanophile'.[6] To be an active Zionist like Abraham Recanati *and* communicate with a fellow Salonikan Jew interned in a French concentration camp, also raised suspicions since in the consuls' mind Zionism equalled Germanophilia.[7] With the telling exception of the Dönme,[8] no ethno-religious identity was ever mentioned in the reports – what mattered was nationality. However, all such implicit references to Salonika and Zionism still constituted a normative discourse on Jewishness promoting a certain assimilationist and pro-Greek understanding of it by incriminating its opposite.

Jewishness was an external, discursively constructed ascription also because the purportedly 'contraband' networks were only partially Jewish. Studies dealing with the war trajectory of international firms in other parts of the world have shown their extensively multi-ethnic composition (Dejung and Zangger 2010). In Salonika, networks and firms had a strong local Jewish core but they also cut through the Sephardic-Ashkenazi divide *and* included members of different ethnicities and holders of various nationalities. Thus, the prominent tobacco company of the Dönme Hassan Akif (an ex-Ottoman and then Greek citizen) included, (apart from members of his immediate family), his son-in-law Muhliss Edhem (of Italian citizenship)

as administrator in Salonika,[9] and the Jew Abram Saporta (a Spanish national), as a silent partner.[10] Christian Orthodox Greeks as well as Muslim Turks directed the company's branches in the tobacco centres of Eastern Greek Macedonia and in the Ottoman city of Ismidt (İzmit).[11] Moreover, a Serb, Zurban, was also a silent partner of the firm and the founder of a Munich-based cigarette factory to which the Salonika branch exported tobacco leaves. The company also owned the German Jewish cigarette factory 'Grathwohl' in Munich[12] and did extensive business with the Ashkenazi Hugo Berdach, a Vienna-based agent of Ottoman and Bulgarian tobacco companies[13]. Furthermore, Leon J. Aelion, another Salonican Jew, mediated the firm's purchases in Salonika during the war.[14] Finally, Hassan Akif's son, Osman Nouri, corresponded with his Ottoman and German partners via Lazare Benveniste, a resident of Zurich and son of the prominent Cavalla-based tobacco magnate and Jewish community president Haim Benveniste, whose firm was also included in the Black List.[15]

As the case of Lazare Benveniste suggests, expatriate Salonikan Jews residing in neutral countries often served as intermediaries forwarding merchandise from Salonika to Germany and Austria-Hungary. Robert de Botton, son of Isaac R. de Botton and a resident of Lausanne, Switzerland, helped his father make purchases in Germany by working together with the Jewish jeweller H. Hirsch from Basle.[16] Tobacco merchant Haim Benveniste relied on the mediation of Zurich-based Elie Frances to do business both with the Cavalla branch of his company (which was under Bulgarian occupation) as well as with the Central Powers.[17] Thus, these networks brought together Sephardim and Askenazim as well as Christians, Jews and Muslims of all sorts cutting through ethnic and sub-ethnic boundaries. But they often did so on the basis of locality and a shared class-cum-professional allegiance as the case of tobacco businessmen Lazare Benveniste and Osman Nouri demonstrates. For that reason determining the nationality of a given firm proved particularly hard for the Entente authorities.

Nationality, and less so ethnicity, thus seem analytically problematic when examining how these firms did business in times of peace and, no less, of war. Nationality in particular, (of the firm, its owner, or its invested capital) might appear as a kind of 'fiction of the archives', a key category of classification, yet unreflective of a much more complex reality. If it mattered however, it was because it could serve as a weapon of the weak, in empowering certain blacklisted firms to press for their removal.

As the war dragged on, inclusion in a black list, particularly a British one, could bring financial catastrophe. Early in the war, information about the chiefly British blacklisted firms circulated solely within government circles while the firms themselves only faced the penalty of a temporary limited access to financial facilities and transatlantic cables (Dehne 2005: 534). By early 1916, however, black lists turned into a punitive means of considerable power. First, they expanded to include all firms trading with the enemy anywhere in the world. Second, they were made publicly known via newspapers,

business publications and government gazettes at a global scale; one can in fact find the blacklisted Salonikan companies as much in the *Levant Trade Review* as in the *Kenya* (20–03–1918) and the *Australian Commonwealth Gazettes* (1918). Third, inclusion now entailed specific and severe penalties, namely, inability to do business with any British subject and permanently denied access to any British service. In short, to be blacklisted could signal a company's economic and no less social death.

Consequently, for Salonikan blacklisted firms operated by foreign nationals like the opium and drug company of the Italian Jew Albert Scialom, foreign citizenship which for long had guaranteed extraterritorial protection, now entailed concrete duties and a high degree of loyalty vis-à-vis the respective nation-state.[18] Yet, nationality was not a straitjacket. Rather, the lengthy correspondence between blacklisted merchants, local consuls and other communal dignitaries reveals how negotiable nationality was on the ground and to what extent it was inscribed within a complex web of relations connecting the Entente authorities with local consuls, merchants, as well as notables and leaders of the Jewish community. It thus confirms, (although from a bottom-up perspective), a recent spate of historical works which has underlined the complex relationship between extraterritoriality and citizenship during World War I and the difficulties of classifying the Jewish foreign nationals from the Levant (Stein 2017).

To mention but one case, Ihno Bensussan, the Greek Jewish representative of opium trader Albert Scialom in Salonika, initially utilized Scialom's Italian citizenship to request from the Italian consul to intervene on his and Scialom's behalf and ask the British consul to remove the firm from the black list.[19] Indeed, the Italian consul obliged, going as far as to coordinate action with his French colleague in order to exert additional pressure.[20] When, however this first attempt proved futile, Scialom and Bensussan marshalled Joseph Nehama, the director of the local French Jewish Alliance schools, a committed Ententophile and a highly respected communal notable, to act on their behalf.[21] Indeed, in March 1918, Nehama sent an appeal to the Italian consul who then forwarded it to his French colleague.[22] Seven months later in October 1918, the two consuls would again correspond[23] and, ultimately, even Chief Rabbi Yaacov Meir would be summoned to plead with the French consul for assistance in removing the firm from the British Black List.[24] In the meantime, the case had been brought to the Italian ambassador in Athens and from there to the Italian commercial attaché in Paris who introduced it for discussion to the highest authority, the Council of the Allies.[25]

Interestingly, although the representatives of the Scialom firm submitted all relevant documentation from every competent Greek authority in town, (including the Customs House and the Chamber of Commerce), they did not seek the advocacy of the newly established Commercial Association of Thessaloniki, nor did they stress their unbending support for the pro-Ententist liberal party of prime minister Eleftherios Venizelos as Christian

Greek companies did.[26] Thus, their moves indicate that they still adhered to a 'late Ottoman' understanding of how local power relations operated, viewing authority as multi-polar and tying one's social status to foreign nationality and communal standing. It was not the ethno-religious identity of its owners, but the intersection of these two axes, the extraterritorial and the communal, that made the Scialom a 'Jewish' company.

This intersection also shaped the semantics of loyalty. The Italian consul did not only ascertain the business 'probity' of Albert Scialom, but also mentioned his high social status calling him 'one of the most well-known members of our [Italian] colony'.[27] Similarly, Nehama highlighted the 'essentially French' education Albert Scialom had received in the Alliance schools, his partner Sam Scialom's participation in the local Alliance Committee, his dedication to the spread of French ideas and influence in the 'Orient', and, lastly, the two Scialoms' purchase of French war bonds.[28] Finally, Chief Rabbi Yaakov Meir testified to the 'unanimous sympathy' the firm enjoyed within the community.[29] Curiously, in an age of heightened nationalism, the multiple identity layers of the Levantine Jewish merchants could not only jeopardize a firm's business standing but be also strategically utilized to prove its owners' loyalty (or multiple loyalties to be more precise).

However, what primarily strengthened the position of the blacklisted Jewish traders and added extra weight to their ethnicity and nationality were the conflicting geostrategic interests of the Entente Powers. During the war, blacklisting often turned into a tool for advancing individual business or national economic interests. Hence, if the French and in particular the Italian consul (and perhaps the Chief Rabbi and Nehama as well) were so willing to support Scialom's petition, it was because co-opting Jewish commerce was an integral part of France's and Italy's post-war plans to replace Austro-Hungarian business domination in the former Ottoman Balkans and strengthen their economic presence in the Eastern Mediterranean at the expense of the British, their present allies but future rivals (Dutton 1979, 1998). During the war, the French and Italians had already used procurement cases in Greek Macedonia to strengthen their economic influence in the region; while in 1917, they established commercial bureaus in Salonika in order to attract prominent local merchants and redirect them to the French and Italian markets.[30] Their post-war plans for the Eastern Mediterranean even went as far as entertaining a possible internationalization of Salonika as beneficial to their imperialist interests. The positive attitude of the two consuls vis-à-vis Albert Scialom might therefore be construed as part of a broader strategy, namely to win over important firms who until then traded extensively with the Central Powers. In a similar case, the French consul pleaded in favour of Dönme tobacco magnate Hassan Akif Zade, downplaying his Austrian citizenship and residence in Munich, and stressing instead Hassan's deep and long loyalty to France while also warning that his inclusion in the British and French black lists would seriously harm 'French interests' in the 'Orient'.[31] It is uncertain how aware Salonikan Jewish merchants were

of the French and Italians' imperialist designs and how consciously they leveraged them. What is nevertheless certain is that in a game involving multiple players with often conflicting objectives, there was enough space for maneuvering and multiple occasions to play the nationality card.

The surviving paper trail thus leads us to rethink how the categories of ethnicity and nationality are strategically utilized by state and non-state actors alike and hence remain fluid and plural even (or perhaps especially) in times of war. In the post-Ottoman Eastern Mediterranean there was nothing particularly, (let alone exclusively), 'Sephardic' or 'Jewish' in the composition and function of international business firms and contraband networks, imaginary or real. Neither did the image of the 'Jewish smuggler' ever capture the public imagination the way the 'Jewish profiteer' did elsewhere.[32] Yet, it was that deep integration into local and international markets as well as the multiple allegiances – formal and informal – Jewish merchants retained in the twilight of imperialism that not only empowered Jews but somehow made them stand apart shaping their own and the others' perception and agency. To the old question 'what was particularly Jewish about all that', the only answer can therefore surprisingly be 'everything that was not'.

Notes

1 French Foreign Minister to French Consul, Salonika 31 August 1915, Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, Consulat général de France à Salonique, Série B, Carton 22, Centre des Archives Diplomatiques de Nantes.
2 French Foreign Minister to French Consul, Salonika 31 August 1915, Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, Consulat général de France à Salonique, Série B, Carton 22, Centre des Archives Diplomatiques de Nantes.
3 French Foreign Minister to French Consul, Salonika 25 September 1915, Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, Consulat général de France à Salonique, Série B, Carton 22, Centre des Archives Diplomatiques de Nantes.
4 French Foreign Minister to French Consul, Salonika 25 September 1915, Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, Consulat général de France à Salonique, Série B, Carton 22, Centre des Archives Diplomatiques de Nantes.
5 Sous-Lieutenant Duvernoy de la Commission Mixte de Ravitaillement to French Consul, Salonika 22 January 1918, Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, Consulat général de France à Salonique, Série B, Carton 139, Centre des Archives Diplomatiques de Nantes.
6 French Consul (Salonika) to Commercial Attaché (Athens), 1 September 1918, Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, Consulat général de France à Salonique, Série B, Carton 139, Centre des Archives Diplomatiques de Nantes.
7 Capitaine Huguet (Commandant militaire des PTT) to de Sandfort (Gerant du Consulat de France, Salonika), 30 August 1918, Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, Consulat général de France à Salonique, Série B, Carton 139, Centre des Archives Diplomatiques de Nantes.
8 The Dönme were Islamicized Jews who had converted en masse in the late 17th century. Mostly concentrated in Salonika and particularly active in long-distance trade, they were socially distinct from the rest of the city's Muslim population. See Baer 2009.

9 Capitaine Huguet (Commandant militaire des PTT) to de Sandfort (Gerant du Consulat de France, Salonika), 30 August 1918, Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, Consulat général de France à Salonique, Série B, Carton 139, Centre des Archives Diplomatiques de Nantes.
10 Capitaine Huguet (Commandant militaire des PTT) to de Sandfort (Gerant du Consulat de France, Salonika), 30 August 1918, Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, Consulat général de France à Salonique, Série B, Carton 139, Centre des Archives Diplomatiques de Nantes.
11 Capitaine Huguet (Commandant militaire des PTT) to de Sandfort (Gerant du Consulat de France, Salonika), 30 August 1918, Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, Consulat général de France à Salonique, Série B, Carton 139, Centre des Archives Diplomatiques de Nantes.
12 French Consul (Salonika) to Commercial Attaché (Athens), 1 September 1918, Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, Consulat général de France à Salonique, Série B, Carton 139, Centre des Archives Diplomatiques de Nantes.
13 French Consul (Salonika) to Commercial Attaché (Athens), 1 September 1918, Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, Consulat général de France à Salonique, Série B, Carton 139, Centre des Archives Diplomatiques de Nantes.
14 Capitaine Huguet (Commandant militaire des PTT) to de Sandfort (Gerant du Consulat de France, Salonika), 30 August 1918, Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, Consulat général de France à Salonique, Série B, Carton 139, Centre des Archives Diplomatiques de Nantes.
15 Capitaine Huguet (Commandant militaire des PTT) to de Sandfort (Gerant du Consulat de France, Salonika), 30 August 1918, Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, Consulat général de France à Salonique, Série B, Carton 139, Centre des Archives Diplomatiques de Nantes.
16 Communique to the Commission interministérielle des listes noires (Mr. Seydoux), Marine (EMG), Commerce (Service Technique), Direction Generale des Douanes (Paris), 20 June 1917, Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, Consulat général de France à Salonique, Série B, Carton 139, Centre des Archives Diplomatiques de Nantes.
17 Capitaine Huguet (Commandant militaire des PTT) to de Sandfort (Gerant du Consulat de France, Salonika), 30 August 1918, Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, Consulat général de France à Salonique, Série B, Carton 139, Centre des Archives Diplomatiques de Nantes.
18 Nehama to Italian Consul (Salonika), 20 March 1918, Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, Consulat général de France à Salonique, Série B, Carton 138, Centre des Archives Diplomatiques de Nantes.
19 Italian Consul (Salonika) to French Consul (Salonika), 20 October 1917, Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, Consulat général de France à Salonique, Série B, Carton 139, Centre des Archives Diplomatiques de Nantes.
20 Italian Consul (Salonika) to French Consul (Salonika), 20 October 1917, Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, Consulat général de France à Salonique, Série B, Carton 139, Centre des Archives Diplomatiques de Nantes.
21 Nehama to Italian Consul (Salonika), 20 March 1918, Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, Consulat général de France à Salonique, Série B, Carton 138, Centre des Archives Diplomatiques de Nantes.
22 Italian Consul (Salonika) to French Consul (Salonika), 24 May 1918, Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, Consulat général de France à Salonique, Série B, Carton 139, Centre des Archives Diplomatiques de Nantes.
23 Italian consul (Salonika) to French vice consul (Salonika), 16 October 1918, Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, Consulat général de France à Salonique, Série B, Carton 139, Centre des Archives Diplomatiques de Nantes.

24 Chief Rabbi Yaacov Meir to Italian Consul (Salonika), 21 February 1919, Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, Consulat général de France à Salonique, Série B, Carton 141, Centre des Archives Diplomatiques de Nantes.
25 Chief Rabbi Yaacov Meir to Italian Consul (Salonika), 21 February 1919, Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, Consulat général de France à Salonique, Série B, Carton 141, Centre des Archives Diplomatiques de Nantes.
26 Marintsoglou Bros to the Commercial Association of Thessaloniki, 16 January 1917, Archive of the Commercial Association of Thessaloniki, File 'Documents, 1916–1919'.
27 Italian Consul (Salonika) to French Consul (Salonika), 20 October 1917, Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, Consulat général de France à Salonique, Série B, Carton 139, Centre des Archives Diplomatiques de Nantes.
28 Joseph Nehama to French Consul (Salonika), 20 March 1918, Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, Consulat général de France à Salonique, Série B, Carton 139, Centre des Archives Diplomatiques de Nantes.
29 Chief Rabbi Yaacov Meir to Italian Consul (Salonika), 21 February 1919, Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, Consulat général de France à Salonique, Série B, Carton 141, Centre des Archives Diplomatiques de Nantes.
30 Note sur le ravitaillement en blé et farine de la Macédoine et des Iles (Salonika), 17 January 1917, Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, Ambassade de France à Athènes, Série A, Carton 360, Centre des Archives Diplomatiques de Nantes.
31 Sous-Lieutenant Duvernoy de la Commission Mixte de Ravitaillement (Salonika) to French Consul (Salonika), 22 January 1918, Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, Consulat général de France à Salonique, Série B, Carton 139, Centre des Archives Diplomatiques de Nantes.
32 Or as it happened with the Maltese in pre-colonial Tunisia: Clancy-Smith 2012. On the image of the Jewish profiteer see Sloin 2010.

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12 Housing, infrastructure, social issues in Salonika during World War I

The presence and role of the Army of the Orient

Eirini Anesti

When the first divisions of the Allied Army of the Orient landed in Salonika on 22 September/5 October 1915, they found an urban ensemble with some particular features bearing on allied planning: its population had doubled since 1870, reaching 158,000 persons in 1913, as a result of both demographic and socio-economic changes, as well as the increasing influx of refugees from the Ottoman Empire and other Balkan regions. These recent developments, combined with the depreciation of the old building stock, disasters and the unstable political and economic context, had exacerbated the problems of housing, public hygiene and social structure.[1]

The French and British officers who had begun to arrive some days earlier, after examining the local circumstances, had to see to the temporary housing of the forces which were to depart for the frontline. However, in reality, the allies' early moves over accommodation did not suggest anything temporary. Even before their arrival, the Greek minister of Transport, Dimitrios Diamantidis, sent a telegram on 21 September/4 October 1915 to the prime minister, Eleftherios Venizelos, informing him that the British General Alexander Hamilton had asked the commander of the Salonika garrison to provide space for the lodging of 70,000 men. At the same time, the city authorities could see the prospect of a lengthy stay in the demands for land concessions for the construction of slaughterhouses and military cemeteries adjacent to the corresponding municipal facilities.[2]

An examination of the emerging housing issue and the measures taken by the authorities enables us to trace the development of a multi-level urban system of governance in Salonika and the area into which the Army of the Orient expanded. As the housing issue affected large parts of the city's population, as well as economic and military activity, the actors involved had to deal with the issues that arose through multilateral coordination. The involvement of the Army of the Orient in the housing and other social issues emerging in the wider area of Salonika during the 'Great War' period had a major and transformative effect on the urban environment.

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Figure 12.1 French landing place.
Source: General Archives of the State, Historical Archive of Macedonia, Collection 'Syllogi Cartes-Postales Thessalonikis', GRGSA-IAM_PHO002-06-IT000019a.

On 18 September/1 October 1915, a number of allied officers under General Alexander Hamilton arrived in Salonika, under orders to prepare the ground for the arrival of a large military force. The head of the Greek Government Press Office of Salonika reported by telegram on 27 September/10 October 1915 to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs:

> The Allies rented hotels, houses, warehouses, occupied hospitals for six months, installed a semaphore on Splendid,[3] ask to install telephones, their demands increase every day, putting our Military Authorities in an unwelcome position.[4]

The prospect of the installation of the Entente military forces on Greek soil provoked reactions from public servants, who started putting various obstacles in the way of the use of infrastructure by the allied military. For the Greeks, it was crucial to avoid any attempt at foreign control over public infrastructure (port, rail) that could be described as an act of occupation. For this reason, as a first step, the Ministry of Transport proceeded to requisition the railways built and controlled by foreign-owned companies. In this context, in order to ensure the fastest possible departure of the allied army from Greek territory, it was decided to provide every possible facility that would not undermine Greece's sovereign rights.[5]

As regards property and other facilities, the allied General Staff reached agreements with the companies which had invested in infrastructure and

real estate in Salonika. One of them was the *Compagnie Immobilière et de Régie de Terrains à Salonique*, a French company and substantial property owner within the city. For instance, the so-called Buildings I and II in Salaminos street, near the port, in which the allied General Headquarters were installed in 1915, belonged to this company. The number of rented parts of these buildings increased over time: 105 rooms were rented in 1915, 187 in 1916, 194 in 1917 and 202 in 1918. Parcels of land amounting to 9,798 m^2, property of the *Compagnie*, were also rented by the General Headquarters to be built on, and parts of them were made available for the British Salonika Force.[6] The *Compagnie* was related to the *Société d'Exploitation du Port de Salonique*, whose docks, warehouses and other equipment such as cranes and traffic passageways for wagons were used by the allied forces, at high rents in some cases.[7] By diplomatic means, but also by exerting various forms of pressure, such as requisitions and the arbitrary or forcible occupation of free spaces and real estate, the allied General Staff gradually managed to overcome the obstacles imposed by the Greek authorities. The situation was so chaotic during these first weeks that on 23 October/ 5 November 1915, the Mayor of Salonika, Osman Said Bey, asked the Commander of the French Army to appoint a person to record what had been constructed to date in various parts of Salonika, so that the relevant tax could be imposed.[8] An additional city had begun to be built within and at the outskirts of the city itself.

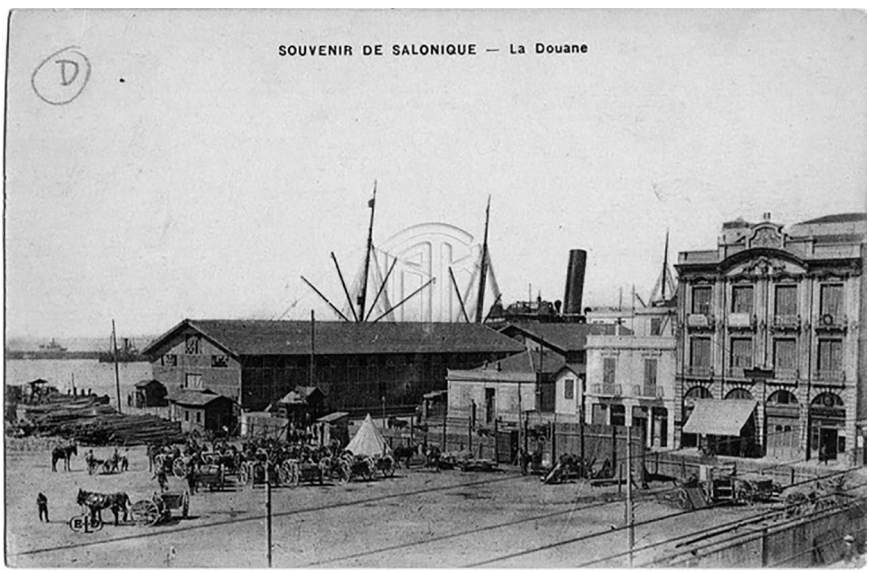

Figure 12.2 Salonika Port, Customs House.
Source: General Archives of the State, Historical Archive of Macedonia, Collection 'Syllogi Cartes-Postales Thessalonikis', GRGSA-IAM_PHO002-04-IT000015a.

From a study of the contracts of the Salonika Land Registry for property transactions, it appears that, from 24 November 1915 to 10 May 1916 (OS), most transactions were granted special permission by the commander of the Salonika garrison.[9] This indicates that the Greek authorities were watching the real estate market very closely, possibly both to combat profiteering and to block uncontrolled sales to the allied army. Bureaucratic obstacles were constantly put in the way of allied installations, as for example in the case of the French military cemetery. It was stipulated that if the allocated space in the existing cemetery were insufficient, only the Greek authorities would be allowed to purchase a new plot. The French would have to undertake the cost, even though the land would remain the property of the municipality.[10] Of course, the majority of these obstacles would be lifted after the declaration of martial law in Salonika by General Maurice Sarrail on 21 May/3 June 1916, when the Entente forces proceeded with the immediate requisition of infrastructure considered necessary for the conduct of the war.[11]

After the collapse of the Serbian front and the creation of the entrenched camp around Salonika (the 'Birdcage'), and throughout their stay in Northern Greece, the Entente military forces contributed to the comprehensive transformation of the areas under their control. Camps and military settlements altered the Macedonian landscape. A number of infrastructure projects were carried out, existing ones were expanded and modernized, while new technologies were put at the service of military activity, such as the use of lorries and tractors, the study and implementation of new irrigation projects and the introduction of new crops.[12] A military force numbering hundreds of thousands of men required specific and complex mechanisms at the rear to manage its everyday life. An extremely sophisticated services' structure was developed to satisfy the army's needs, as multilevel and complicated as the organization of a large community in peacetime.[13] But this overwhelming presence, which amounted effectively to the transformation of Salonika into a huge military camp, gave rise to significant social tensions.

Overcrowding and war conditions exerted terrible pressures on urban life, which were felt particularly among the weaker sections of the population. According to the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs, by 2/15 December 1915, 82,080 French and 85,556 British officers and men had arrived at the port of Salonika so that the population of the city was doubled within a month.[14] The deterioration in housing conditions was accompanied by shortages in food and commodities in the city markets, as well as dramatic price inflation. The eight months' allied blockade had deprived Greece of its reserve stocks. Additionally, coastal trade was suffering greatly due to submarine losses and the requisition by the allies of a great number of Greek vessels. Profiteering had been only partially controlled and prices of all commodities reached phenomenally high levels.[15] Moreover, since 1916, the region faced currency issues. Given the ratio of the allied forces to the local population, it was difficult for the banks to deal with their increasing needs

Figure 12.3 French Camp in Zeitenlik.
Source: General Archives of the State, Historical Archive of Macedonia, Collection 'Syllogi Cartes-Postales Thessalonikis', GRGSA-IAM_PHO002-02-IT000213.

for local currency. After the establishment of the Provisional Government in Salonika, the National Bank of Greece, which controlled the issue of currency and remained under the royalist government in Athens, restricted the supply of drachmas to its branches in Macedonia. As the Provisional Government's demand to issue drachmas was rejected by the Entente governments, the result was the parallel and occasionally forced circulation of foreign currency in its territory, particularly French francs, although general Sarrail refrained from officially imposing this. As a consequence, due to its oversupply, the franc was devalued in Macedonia and since the Greek public services refused to accept it for payments, it remained a cause of continuous friction between local traders and the allied authorities.[16]

Meanwhile, a part of the population was forced to work in construction sites, along with prisoners of war, as the Entente army's available human and material resources were inadequate for the volume of infrastructure projects to be executed. In October 1916, the Field Engineers' Service emphasized in its report to general Sarrail that manpower was still insufficient, despite the extensive requisition of labour. The allied services were thus forced to resort to subcontractors for the supply of workers, but the requisition of labour, often accompanied by violent incidents, remained frequent, both at the front and within the entrenched camp of Salonika.[17] At the same time, there was intensive consumption of natural resources in Macedonia,

often arbitrarily and forcibly imposed, without prior consultation with the Greek authorities, such as mining, as well as extensive enforced and in many cases illegal logging.[18] Local agricultural production was also affected by warfare, especially in the Macedonian countryside, where damage to property and requisition of public buildings, houses and farmsteads as well as the seizure of raw materials, animals and utensils were commonplace in areas where the allied forces were operating.[19]

Where property was concerned, there were cases of arbitrary requisition of residential or commercial property, demanded or simply tolerated by the allied General Staff, as well as forced rentals at a minimum price.[20] The situation became even more suffocating after the establishment of the Provisional Government in September 1916, which proceeded to requisition properties in order to cover its own needs, as well as accommodate refugees, whose numbers further increased in the city after the Bulgarian advance into Eastern Macedonia. The need of the allied army to evacuate entire villages within the operational zones simply made things worse. In order to shelter this wandering population, the Provisional Government was closely verifying any type of legal transaction of landed property, and proceeded with the requisition of the necessary buildings and apartments under Law 327/1914. There were numerous cases of conflict of interest between the allied forces and the Greek authorities on matters of property ownership. The Provisional Government was seeking confiscations, but the Entente

Figure 12.4 Allied Quarries.
Source: General Archives of the State, Historical Archive of Macedonia, Collection 'Syllogi Cartes-Postales Thessalonikis', GRGSA-IAM_PHO002-08-IT000038.

consular and military authorities, in consultation with the owners, often intervened to stop these actions.[21]

Through the creation of the Supreme Directorate of Public Property and Internal Colonisation, by Decree 81/6–10–1916, the Provisional Government endeavoured to impose order on land ownership and sought the cooperation of the Entente for this purpose. In order to make the necessary demarcations, and to implement vital agricultural and mechanical engineering projects, such as swamp drainage, irrigation and the rebuilding of settlements, and to draw up land registry maps, the new service required engineers and geometers; but neither the provinces under the Provisional Government nor Old Greece had the appropriate staff. The Greek authorities appealed to the representatives of the Entente countries to provide qualified experts, tempting them with attractive projects which would require foreign investment.[22]

The Great Fire of 18 August 1917 disintegrated and reshaped the city's social structure. The allied forces' contribution to the housing and care of the fire victims, and financial support of the city's communities, was substantial. Moreover, following the immediate and decisive intervention of the Venizelos' liberal government in the organization of this enormous project, the involvement of the Army of the Orient played a decisive role.[23] The *commission chargée d'étudier le plan de reconstruction de la ville* included two officers of the Army of the Orient, the French architect and archaeologist Ernest Hébrard and the engineer Joseph Pleyber, Captain of French Artillery. Taking advantage of the allied influence in Greece, a number of study groups and contractors attempted to engage in the reconstruction of the city in the years after the war, and in the projects of reshaping the surrounding landscape.[24] Western-European interests had a significant influence on the modern approach of urban design issues, where the creation of added value and its use for the benefit of the community would be key demands.[25]

The withdrawal of the allied troops from Salonika was as complicated and painful a process as their settlement. The final dissolution of Salonika's military base took place in January 1921. The *Direction de la Liquidation des stocks de l'Armée d'Orient* undertook the sale of huge quantities of materials and real estate acquired by public institutions, private companies and traders. The Army of the Orient was leaving behind infrastructure including roads, water supply systems and other improvements that could not be liquidated and would remain as a legacy to the country. In exchange the Greek state would provide facilities for foreign trade and business within its territory. The use of the infrastructure exploited and expanded by the Entente military forces had to be regularized. Thus there began a long administrative process concerning the necessary arrangements and the award of damages claimed by companies whose facilities had been used or commandeered by the Army of the Orient.[26]

The presence of the allied forces in the region of Macedonia left its mark on the lives of the local population, especially the lower income strata, leading to the creation of acute social problems, intensified by the refugee issue and

Figure 12.5 Fire of 18-19-20 August 1917, French Street, British Post Office.
Source: General Archives of the State, Historical Archive of Macedonia, Collection 'Syllogi Cartes-Postales Thessalonikis', GRGSA-IAM_PHO002-02-IT000108a.

the economic and political circumstances. However, the processes of urban transformation and environmental transition over time were not interrupted by the war. On the contrary, life in Salonika changed pace and became more complex with the installation there of a multinational and multicultural military force. Its withdrawal left to the area a legacy of modern architectural and town planning elements and new or improved infrastructure, features of the urban and social developments of the interwar period.[27] Even if the expropriation of the area destroyed during the fire and the new town planning measures were finally only partially implemented due to changes of government, the reactions of local interests, and the unstable national context of 1920s Greece, western influences and capital investment left their clear mark on the urban evolution of Salonika and on landmarks which are still present today.

Notes

1 Karadimos-Yerolympos 1999: 229, 238–9; for the city's population increase, see Karadimos-Yerolympos 2008: 133, table.
2 Diamantidis to Proedron Kyverniseos (21 September 1915) and Daralexis to Ypourgeion Exoterikon (28 September 1915), Diplomatic and Historical Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Greece (henceforth DIA), Arheio Kentrikis Ypiresias 1915/0.0, A/4,5.
3 Hotel Splendid was one of the main hotels on the Salonika quay.

4 Hatzivassileiou to Ypourgeion Exoterikon (27 September 1915), DIA, 1915/0.0, A/4,5.
5 Maison to Ministre de la Guerre (29 January 1917), Service historique de la Défense (henceforth SHD) – Archives de la Guerre 1914–18: GR 7 N 2062. Epiteliki Ypiresia Stratou to Ypourgeion Exoterikon (30 October 1915), DIA, 1915/0.0, A/4,5.
6 Directeur de la Compagnie Immobilière et de Régie de Terrains à Salonique to Consul de Salonique (23 February 1923) and Convention entre le Général Commandant les Troupes Françaises de Macédoine et la Compagnie Immobilière et de Régie de Terrains à Salonique (23 July 1919), Archives du Ministère des Affaires étrangères (henceforth AE): Salonique Consulat 604PO/B 42. Nantes: Centre des Archives Diplomatiques.
7 Convention entre le Général Sarrail et le Général Milne (14 May 1917) and Société d'exploitation du Port de Salonique, Assemblée générale ordinaire, Rapport du Conseil d'Administration (27 June 1919), AE, Salonique Consulat 604PO/B 42.
8 Osman Said Bey to Arhigon Stratou tis Gallikis Stratias tis Anatolis (23 October 1915), DIA, 1915/0.0, A/4,5.
9 Contracts No 264 (24 November 1915), M/T Z, to 36 (10 May 1916), H: Archive of the Salonika Land Registry (SLR).
10 Ypourgeion Exoterikon to Guillemin (3 November 1915), DIA, 1915/0.0, A/4,5.
11 Le Représentant de la Ligne Salonique-Monastir to Sarrail (6 June 1916) and Direction des affaires politiques et commerciaux to Légation de France à Athènes (9 June 1916), AE, Salonique Consulat 604PO/B 43.
12 NA, Rapport sur l'utilisation de la Grèce comme base de ravitaillement de l'Armée d'Orient (May–June 1917), AE, Athènes Ambassade 48PO/A 291. See also Malaquin 1919: 3–14; Mann 1920: 27, 30, 71, 83–4, 87–8.
13 See SHD, GR 16 N 2904 : Rapports de l'A.O : Rapports sur le fonctionnement des services.
14 Hatzivassileiou to Ypourgeion Exoterikon (2 December 1915), DIA, 1915/0.0, A/4,5.
15 Sarrail to Proedron tis Prosorinis Kyverniseos (28 April 1917), DIA, 1917/0.0, Arheio Thessalonikis A/21. See also *The Balkan News* (6 October 1917); Potamianos 2015: 59–60.
16 Hekimoglou 1994: 77–82. Negrepontis to Ethniki Trapeza tis Ellados (16 and 22 February 1917) and Ekthesi Kyvernitikou Epitropou Kozanis-Florinis (January 1917) and Tamias Kastorias to Anotati Diefthinsi Oikonomikon (8 February 1917), DIA, 1917/0.0, Arheio Thessalonikis A/III. See also Bacharas 2015: 38–9.
17 Refroigney to Sarrail, No 1047A, Rapport de fonction du Service de Génie Octobre 1916. (31 October 1916), SHD, GR 16 N 2904. Sarrailto Général Cdt le Génie de l'A.O. (23 March 1916), SHD, GR 20 N 66. Anotati Diefthinsis Perithalpseos to Ypourgeion Exoterikon (18 January 1917), DIA, 1917/0.0, Arheio Thessalonikis A/VIII (2). Wakefield and Moody 2011: 151–2.
18 Reports of the Forest Inspectorates of Halkidiki (22 May 1916), Florina and Lagkada (5 August 1916) and Salonika (2 February 1916), DIA, 1916/0.0, A/4/XI (5). Franchet d'Espèrey to Ministre de France à Athènes (28 June 1918) and NA, Rapport sur l'utilisation de la Grèce comme base de ravitaillement de l'Armée d'Orient (May–June 1917), AE, Athènes Ambassade 48PO/A 291.
19 Anotera Dioikisis Horofylakis Makedonias to Ypourgeion Exoterikon (13 February 1916), DIA, 1916/0.0, A/4/XI (5). Astynomiki Ypodiefthinsis Kastorias to Kyvernitikon Epitropon Kozanis-Florinis (8 December 1916), DIA, 1917/0.0, Arheio Thessalonikis A/VIII.
20 Astynomiki Diefthinsis Lagkada to Anotera Dioikisin Horofylakis Makedonias (28 February 1916), DIA, 1916/0.0, A/4/XI (5). Proxeneion tis Italias to Ypourgeion Exoterikon (31 January 1917), DIA, 1917/0.0, Arheio Thessalonikis A/6.
21 Ypourgeion Exoterikon to Billy (18 January 1917), DIA, 1917/0.0, Arheio Thessalonikis A/6: At the beginning of 1917, the number of refugees in Salonika

climbed to 39,000. NA, Note des maisons dont la réquisition n'a pu être effectuée à la suite de prières ou interventions de personnes appartenant au service Allié (ND), General Administration of Macedonia 94. Salonika: Historical Archive of Macedonia (IAM). *Efimeris tis Prosorinis Kyverniseos tou Vassileiou tis Ellados*, 43 (21 February 1917), SLR, Θ.

22 NA, Note to R. de Billy (23 February 1917), DIA, 1917/0.0, Arheio Thessalonikis A/III.

23 Rapport sur la gestion de la Commission centrale des secours aux sinistrés de Salonique pour la période 22 août 1917–31 décembre 1918 (14 February 1919), IAM, 28. Consul de France à Salonique to Billy (8 September 1917), AE, Athènes Ambassade 48PO/A 291.

24 See Expropriations- Incendie de Salonique, AE, Athènes Ambassade 48PO/A 291. Karadimos-Yerolympos 1999: 251–3; Hastaoglou 1988: 94–5, 97, 100–1.

25 Kalogirou 1988: 89–90.

26 See Bureau Liquidation, SHD, GR 20 N 917. Wiet to Marcilly (17 February 1922) and Société d'exploitation du Port de Salonique, Assemblée générale ordinaire, Rapport du Conseil d'Administration (27 June 1919), AE, Salonique Consulat 604PO/B 42. Also Sarrail to Graillet (14 November 1917), AE, Salonique Consulat 604PO/B 43 and Grandguillot to Ambassade de France à Athènes (9 August 1919), AE, Athènes Ambassade 48PO/A 291.

27 Hastaoglou 1988: 94–5, 97, 100–1; Kalogirou 1988: 89–90.

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– A/21 Kataggelies_gia_epitaxeis, _afthairesies

– A/6 Antigrafa_diakoinoseon, _diatagmaton, _epistolon_k.a.

– A/III Oikonomikes_Dyshereies_tis_Prosorinis_Dioikiseos

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13 Greek Eastern Macedonia, 1916–18

The experience of the Bulgarian occupation

Evanthis Hatzivassiliou

The Bulgarian occupation of Greek Eastern Macedonia started in August 1916. After Greece's entry into the war in June 1917, conditions sharply deteriorated; almost 40,000 Greek males from the age of 15–70 (and even some women) were taken to labour camps in Bulgaria and in Bulgarian-occupied Serb Macedonia.[1] About 500 children were abducted, many of whom were never returned after the war. According to the Inter-Allied Commission that investigated the occupation in 1919, 14% of the civilian population of 305,000 died of famine and disease or in the labour camps (Barker 1950; Hassiotis 2005; Kotzageorgi-Zymari 2005; Roudemetoff 2008; Hatzivassiliou 2014).

When the Greek and the allied authorities moved into Eastern Macedonia in autumn 1918, they found a population deprived of the means to sustain itself, including the year's crop, draught animals, domestic animals, and the seeds needed to plant a new crop. The danger of famine was averted only thanks to a huge humanitarian effort by the British and the American Red Cross which lasted until summer 1919 (American Red Cross 1919; Giannouli 1996; Davis 2013; Daleziou 2013; Hatzivassiliou 2014). Still, in the difficult circumstances of the first post-war months, shortages of food soon occurred in Bulgaria as well.[2] In late 1918 (and in anticipation of the forthcoming investigation of the Inter-Allied Commission), the Greek authorities collected a large number of statements from local people regarding the conditions of 1916–18. This chapter discusses these witness statements, deposited in the archives of the Greek Foreign Ministry.

These documents are important from a methodological point of view. After the war, especially in Britain, a great number of interviews of soldiers were collected. This material boosted research on the experiences of the fighters in the trenches. However, no such initiative was taken by the Greek authorities after 1918. The witness statements of the Greek civilians partially cover this gap: they do not have the systematic character of structured interviews but offer an interesting perspective of personal experience under occupation.

The documents are in Greek, and the translations presented here have been done by the author. The witness statements vary significantly in form, according to the style of the local officers responsible for a specific area. For

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example, in the town of Vetrina (today's Neo Petritsi), the authorities used a structured questionnaire, but this was an exception. Some statements were given under oath, and are legal documents rather than personal 'reports'. Usually, the informants presented a single narrative of their experiences; their stories reflect their education, social status and ideology (Venizelist or anti-Venizelist). Educated people such as civil servants or high school graduates tended to write their own accounts. Those statements which the officials considered more important were subsequently typed or even translated into French, for submission to the Inter-Allied Commission. The criterion for the submission of a deposition was not the harshness of the experience narrated, but rather the level of the informant's education; many testimonies of uneducated witnesses, expressing their agony, were not considered worthy of international presentation. As a rule, while educated people tried to keep up appearances, the less educated were more direct and angry. Interestingly, in the case of the upper classes, only males spoke to the authorities. Testimonies of women appear only in cases of poorer, uneducated families. The vast majority of the interviewees were Greeks: the relevant files contain very few statements by Muslim or Jewish members of the population. The most prominent exception to this rule is Akil Bey, the mayor of Serres during Ottoman rule, who was retained at his post by the Eleftherios Venizelos government after 1913, removed by the Bulgarians in June 1917, and reinstated by the Venizelos government after the war.

This chapter will attempt to go beyond the description of 'atrocities by the Bulgarians' (the usual subject of the testimonies) and focus on the perceptions and sentiments of the witnesses. One of their regular fears was that their predicaments had been so harsh, that their reports would not be believed by the authorities. The statements often include phrases such as 'this is not the product of imagination … these are events I have seen with my own eyes'; 'I am afraid that I am not going to be believed for what I say about Kavalla'.[3] Some noted that their reports did not contain the full spectrum of their torments: 'And how many more my mind is incapable of recalling in order to describe these terrible woes, my hands are trembling and I restrict myself to these only'.[4]

Patterns of experiences

Discussing the start of the Bulgarian occupation, most Greek civil servants focused on their efforts to protect the archives of their services, which however were taken and destroyed by the Bulgarians with almost no exception.[5] The imposition of Bulgarian rule was followed by a harsh policy towards the Greek population. The city of Serres had been destroyed by the retreating Bulgarian army in 1913, during the Second Balkan War, and was now going through a new round of misery. The witnesses mentioned many cases of beatings, the pillaging of stores and houses, blackmail, imprisonment and deaths. Famine reduced the population to desperation:

> The doors of the houses were frantically knocked on by women, children and men who, with shouts, sobs and tears sought some bread to satisfy their hunger. Each day, exiting our houses we saw people in the streets dying the horrible death of famine, writhing on the ground like headless chickens. I saw people cutting pieces from the rotten carcasses of dogs and throwing them on the fire to cook and eat, I saw others roast wild birds, I saw others boiling cats to eat, I saw others eating their own lice.[6]

The death toll in the city of Serres rose significantly because of the famine. According to the statistics of the mayor, Akil Bey, the number of deaths rose from 70 and 66 in January and February 1916 respectively, to 248 and 322 for the same months in 1917.[7] Moreover, many inhabitants left the city. According to the Greek Minister of the Interior, Constantinos Raktivan, when the allies entered the city in 1918, the population (35,000 in 1916) consisted of 5,793 women, children and a few men; this was the number of daily rations that his services provided.[8]

The situation in Drama was better, but the problem was more serious in Kavalla, the coastal city of the area. The island of Thassos, facing Kavalla, was in the hands of allied forces, and thus the Bulgarians had to erect fortifications against a possible allied landing, using Greeks as forced labour.[9] The Greeks were treated as potential agents of the allies: they were forbidden to approach the sea, as well as to travel to the countryside to acquire food. As a result, a humanitarian disaster occurred. The figure of 12–14,000 dead from starvation in Kavalla recurs in the reports of the Greek authorities.[10] Numerous witness statements refer to the regular sight of unburied corpses in the streets, which boosted the population (and size) of rats.[11] Evidently the rats caused the outbreak of the typhus epidemic during the occupation (another epidemic occurred after liberation, see Walker 1919).

There was widespread destruction in the Greek villages around Mount Pangaion – primarily in Rodoleivos, Semalto (Mikro Souli), Kupkoy (Proti), Pravista in the north, Moustheni and Pravi (Eleftheroupolis) in the south. One of the volunteers of the American Red Cross, the archaeologist of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, Carl Blegen, undertook a fact-finding mission in late 1918, and painted an alarming picture of destruction and impending famine.[12] As a result, the American Red Cross mounted a special effort in the Pangaion region (Barry 1919). The looting of the monasteries of Timios Prodromos in Serres and of Eikosifoinissa in the Pangaion resulted in the removal of important artifacts and is still an issue in bilateral relations today (Katsaros 1995).

The number of '25 beatings', the standard penalty in the Bulgarian army, 'for the slightest mistake that we would make during work', looms large in the testimonies.[13] Yet, some witnesses stressed that many Greeks also took advantage of this situation in order to profiteer at the expense of their co-nationals.[14] In these conditions, there was a collapse of social morals and solidarity:

> In the streets crawl human skeletons, crying and begging for mercy, but the passer-by walks on unmoved, incapable of aiding anybody, having become indifferent even to the most heartbreaking scenes.[15]

Then, there was the delicate issue of rape or sexual blackmail, especially of poor women whose husbands had been taken hostage to Bulgaria and who had no means of feeding their children. The women of the upper classes usually managed to avoid forced intercourse, since they were able to get food at excessively high prices, by selling family valuables. In contrast, much more direct were the testimonies of uneducated, poor women, apparently extremely angry, who had been more exposed to sexual violence and wanted to speak about their torments: 'It is true that the girls shouted, but who would hear them?', one witness from Kavalla commented about the rape of her daughters and herself.[16] However, after the occupation, there was a tendency to impose silence on these incidents (Roudemetoff 2008, 1:30). This silence of 'good' society took many forms. In Serres, the Bulgarian authorities used the pretext of sanitary examination of prostitutes to 'examine' all the local women, especially those of the upper class, parading them through the centre of the city as a humiliation to the Greeks. However, this is reported by only two of the numerous witnesses speaking about Serres.[17] Often, information about forced intercourse comes from foreign (e.g. British) rather than Greek sources.[18]

The most telling example of imposed silence over sexual abuses involves the town of Doxato, which had been burned down by the Bulgarian army in 1913, during the Second Balkan War, with the loss of more than 400 people. One would expect this community to be very outspoken about its new hardships, but things were more complicated. In December 1918, the local leaders provided a testimony to a Greek officer, Captain Tsirogiannis, to be forwarded to the Inter-Allied Commission. However, when in March 1919 the officials of the Commission were cross-checking their evidence and read the document to these people, they refused to sign it. A partially revised document was finally submitted. The March 1919 statement – the final one – noted that the Bulgarians forced 'women and virgins' to participate in their dances, 'running the risk of losing the sense of shame, regarded as an important asset for a woman' (Roudemetoff 2008, 2: 206–19). But the December 1918 statement had referred to the forcing by the Bulgarians of 'virgins *and boys* to participate in their obscene dances'.[19] In other words, the original document spoke about the sexual forcing of boys younger than 15 years (older men had been taken hostage to Bulgaria). Evidently, this was something that a small semi-urban community could not bear to make public.

Labour camps, 1917–18

The 22nd of June 1917 recurs constantly in the statements of those taken to Bulgaria or Bulgarian-occupied Serb Macedonia as 'hostages' (the term

used by the local population). The reports converge on the inadequate food that they received, beatings during the trip and the torment of thirst. After reaching their destinations, the infamous 'Lagers', the hostages had to live in extremely unsanitary conditions, mostly in huts with roofs of straw that could not keep the rain out, which contributed to widespread disease, including typhus; many refer to the 'swamps' in which they had to live, 'like wild animals'.[20] Prominent officials, such as bishops or mayors, were not forced to work. Elderly people were soon released from forced labour, and some were sheltered by officials of neutral countries such as the Netherlands.[21]

However, back at the work areas, the situation was horrible. The sick were not relieved of duties, and the hostages were expected to dig even on days when the ground had frozen. In these circumstances, sadism developed among the guards, although many of them were educated and some had studied, as one hostage noted, 'in Europe': 'Even the dead were hit to rise from their sleep, despite our assurances that they were no longer among the living'.[22] Not surprisingly, the darkest instincts of the hostages themselves also came to the fore:

> In the Lager I saw with my own eyes men almost nude and so hungry as to engage in Homeric battles around the kitchen to get the hard peelings of pumpkins and the other useless leaves of vegetables that the cooks had thrown in the garbage.[23]

In Greece's Eastern Macedonian memory, there is one location that stands out as a place of suffering. Kicevo, a town in occupied Serb Macedonia, appears very often and very darkly in the testimonies:

> Then they took us to Kicevo … and the snow rose to one metre and they worked us to build roads, it is there that they cut the people down, out of 850 Greeks who went there with me, only 90 evaded this fate (50 too old to work and 40 sick) whom they sent to Old Bulgaria, and because they were in a dreadful state we do not know if they are still alive, the rest, except these 90 individuals, died in the accursed Kicevo a martyr's death, as they [the jailers] sent them to bed beating them, they could not endure and they died, and were buried without a priest, and we saw many tombs opened, and the dogs ate them.[24]

Even after they were freed, the hostages were in a dreadful state. In April 1919, the Athens bureau of the American Red Cross described the returning Greek hostages like this:

> They arrive in droves at the American Red Cross relief stations, having been without food of any kind for days. Women walk into the stations with dead babies in their arms. Young girls, driven insane by the treatment they have received, are common sights, while the children are but

> living skeletons … Arriving at distribution points the refugees make their way on foot or in army camions to their old homes, only to find the habitations they were forced to leave leveled to the ground. And here is seen one of the most pathetic features … their utterly broken spirit. They evince absolutely no interest in life and apparently have little ambition for the future. They accept whatever is done for them in an apathetic, listless way and their demeanor of hopeless dejection scarcely ever varies.
>
> (American Red Cross 1919, 9–10)

Conclusions

This was, of course, an episode of the Great War; but it is also a theme with a narrower, regional perspective. 'Hidden' within the First World War (but also within the Second) was a Bulgarian attempt to annex Macedonian lands, namely, Serb Macedonia and Greek Eastern Macedonia, which Sofia occupied in 1916 (and in 1941). The Bulgarian occupation of 1916–18 did not aim to secure the short-term 'control' of these territories for strategic purposes (as did, for example, the German occupation of Belgium or northern France); it aimed to achieve a permanent annexation – hence the effort to destroy archives or scatter Greek males over a wider region. They were all fighting; but different powers fought a different kind of war in Macedonia of 1915–18. The great powers were involved in a war of coalitions in the conventional manner. But the regional states (Bulgaria, Greece, and Serbia) were at the same time engaged in a new phase of the Macedonian question, a national dispute of immense intensity and great historical depth. And the people of the region did not have a 'conventional' experience of the 'Great War'; they lived through another phase of the Macedonian question. This is clear in the testimonies of the Greek civilians.

It would be a mistake, however, to assume that these were the manifestations of an unchangeable Balkan world of cruelty. Progressively, during the Cold War, the Greeks and the Bulgarians managed to overcome the legacy of struggles to the death, through the honest acceptance of the territorial status quo. Thus, if the picture that this article sketches is harsh, the accomplishment by the two countries becomes all the more important. The magnitude of the achievement of the eventual Greek-Bulgarian pacification is not always fully acknowledged by international observers.

Still, a historian needs to go beyond these relatively simple observations, and seek a wider interpretation. This was the time when this part of the world – it was then called the 'Near East', today it is a part of 'Europe' – made a sudden and violent transition from imperial government, which had been its dominant model since at least the time of Alexander the Great in the 4th century BC, to the era of the nation-state. Geographical Macedonia became the crossroads from where various groups of refugees were leaving,

passing through or were arriving to settle in it. Transitions of this magnitude can be unspeakably cruel. Individuals tended to be crushed in the millstones of history, as an unnamed 17-year-old hostage from Kavalla tells us:

> Now that, as a prisoner, I crossed the river [Nestos] I tasted the greatest bitterness of my life. I feel that I am no longer a child, that I have grown old and that for 100 years now, I have lived in the hardships of old age.[25]

Notes

1 Initial reports referred to almost 100,000 deportees. Recent scholarship (for example Hassiotis 2005) provides more modest estimations.
2 London, The National Archives [hereafter TNA] /FO 371/3588/34360, Lamb to Curzon, 3 March 1919.
3 Athens, Diplomatic and Historical Archive of the Foreign Ministry (hereafter DIAYE), 1918/Γ/ΑΑΚ6, Reports by G.L (Serres), n.d, and N.M, in 'Depositions [under oath] of Greek prisoners of Eastern Macedonia', n.d.
4 DIAYE, 1918/4/4, Report by E.H. (Doxato), 15 November 1918.
5 See among others, DIAYE, 1918/Γ/ΑΑΚ6, Protocol of Heads of State Services, Serres, 14 November 1918; DIAYE, 1918/Γ/108,109, Reports by A.L., 1 Nov., P.M., 31 October 1918, of postal service of Drama.
6 DIAYE, 1918/Γ/ΑΑΚ6, Report by G.L, n.d. Many similar testimonies in the same file.
7 DIAYE, 1918/Γ/ΑΑΚ6, Tables (Akil bey), 2 February, 6 March, 13 and 14 April 1917, and Akil Bey to an unnamed 'Colonel', 27 October 1918.
8 DIAYE, 1918/Γ/ΑΑΚ6, Raktivan to Venizelos, 27 September 1918. See similar information in TNA/FO 371/3159/174480, Granville to Balfour, 6 October 1918.
9 DIAYE, 1918/3/7, Vavaris (Kavala Gendarmerie) to Supreme Command of the Gendarmerie of [Greek] Macedonia, 6 January 191[9].
10 Statistics regarding Kavala's pre-war population vary, as many thousands of refugees, seasonal tobacco workers and soldiers must be added to its 35–40,000 permanent inhabitants. However, a Bulgarian census immediately after the start of the occupation recorded a population of 32,000, including Greeks, Muslims and Jews. This means that a number of 12–14,000 deaths amounted to more than one third of the Greek population of the city. Many also fled the city. When the allied authorities entered Kavala in 1918, the population had been reduced to 8,500 people. See for more, the previous note and statements of former mayor Nikolaos Serdaroglou, 31 January 1919, and former MP Evgenios Iordanou, 2 February 1919, in Roudemetoff (2008,1:119–24 and 135–9).
11 See for Kavala, DIAYE, 1918/Γ/ΑΑΚ6, Report by C.V., n.d., and 'Pillaging, blackmail and torments of the Greeks left in Kavala', n.d.; DIAYE, 1918/3/7, Reports of medical doctors of Kavala (N.T. I.H., Th.T.), 30 October 1918. See also TNA/FO 371/3159/188264, Imperial Ottoman Bank (reports from Kavala and Serres) to Foreign Office, 18 October 1918.
12 Athens, American School for Classical Studies at Athens, Blegen Library Archives, Carl W. Blegen Papers, Carl Blegen diary, 6 November–3 December 1918. [Online] Retrieved from http://www.ascsa.edu.gr/index.php/archives/blegen-red-cross-diary-1918 [accessed 30 August 2012]; Blegen Papers, 6/3, Blegen to Day, 11 January 1919.
13 See, among others, DIAYE, 1918/Γ/ΑΑΚ6, Testimony by A.K., in 'Testimonies [under oath] of Greek prisoners of Eastern Macedonia', n.d.; DIAYE, 1918/4/4, statement of V.S., n.d. [January 1919].

14 DIAYE, 1918/Γ/ΑΑΚ6, Report by E.V., 17 October 1918; DIAYE, 1918/Γ/108,109, Report, Goete Tzovaropoulos, 6 and 8 November 1918 (published in Pennas 2017).
15 DIAYE, 1918/Γ/108,109, Report by M.F. (Serres), 1 November 1918.
16 DIAYE, 1918/Γ/ΑΑΚ6, testimony of K.V., in 'Pillaging, blackmail and torments of the Greeks left in Kavala', n.d. The same document records additional cases of rapes.
17 DIAYE, 1918/Γ/ΑΑΚ5, Reports by I.S., medical doctor, 26 October, and by M.F, 1 November 1918.
18 TNA/FO 371/3159/188264, Imperial Ottoman Bank (Kavala) to Foreign Office, 18 October 1918.
19 DIAYE, 1918/Γ109, 'Narrative of the predicaments of the inhabitants of Doxato', 21 December 1918. Emphasis by the author.
20 See numerous reports in DIAYE, 1918/Γ/ΑΑΚ6; DIAYE, 1918/3/7; DIAYE, 1918/4/4.
21 See among others, DIAYE, 1918/3/7, Report by I.V., 28 September 1918.
22 DIAYE, 1918/Γ/ΑΑΚ6, Report by G.L., n.d. Many similar statements in the same file and in DIAYE, 1918/Γ/108,109.
23 DIAYE, 1918/Γ/ΑΑΚ4, Report by G.C. of Pravi, 18 October 1918.
24 DIAYE, 1918/Γ/ΑΑΚ5, Report by A.A., n.d.
25 DIAYE, 1918/Γ/ΑΑΚ6, unnamed, in 'Depositions [under oath] of Greek prisoners of Eastern Macedonia', n.d.

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14 Behind the front lines

Serbian soldiers on everyday life in Salonika

Jasmina Tomasevic

In this chapter, I aim to outline a new historical approach to allied relations at the Macedonia Front, viewing these largely through the eyes of Serbian soldiers, and considering in particular their perceptions of the war, their allies and indeed the city of Salonika itself, the common meeting place of allied soldiers and civilians.[1]

Many studies and books have been published on the diplomatic relations and military activity of the allied countries. But traditional Serbian historians of the events of 1914–18 have made insufficient effort to examine aspects of the soldiers' everyday life, and to investigate the perception of the ordinary soldier – the 'little' man – in the Great War, and in that manner to provide a subjective human approach to the history of the war. As a result, issues that have not been studied hitherto in detail include communication among ordinary soldiers; their perceptions and images of the war, the Macedonian Front and the Allies; and the relationships that developed between them through their interactions in Salonika, Corfu or at the front. Apart from coordinated military operations of different troops in the wider region of Macedonia, it was essentially in Salonika that there were opportunities for contact and communication between soldiers of the different allied forces. The city was effectively the only common shelter for the Allies, where soldiers of different nationalities could approach and meet each other, entertain and be entertained, develop familiarity, and try to forget the cruelties of the war. We shall see how, precisely because of the multifaceted and rich content of the soldiers' everyday life in Salonika, there developed an image of the city as a centre of entertainment.

Let us see what a normal day in the life of the soldiers in Salonika in the years 1916–18 was like. The Allied Army of the Orient turned the city into its own microcosm, full of theatres, cinemas, cafes, and restaurants. A single Serbian soldier – and not only Serbian – might be present at the opening of new shops and restaurants, attend Divine Liturgy or foreign language classes, or visit some of the cinemas that were located in Nikis Avenue such as the Olympia, Pathé and Pallas, where he would have an opportunity to watch comedies that he much preferred to war movies. Additionally, he could see a play in theatres such as the Odeon or one of the semi-professional

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theatres, in which his colleagues were also taking part. Together with the city residents, he could attend concerts of military bands, which played almost daily in Eleftherias Square and the park of the White Tower. At these moments he could listen for the 100th time to 'Le Régiment de Sambre et Meuse', which the French military band lost no opportunity to play; or the 'March to the Drina', the most famous Serbian poem from the Great War; or even the Russian military band with its balalaikas, which – according to war diaries – 'used to spoil the mood of the crowd' (Stamboulis 1984: 390).

But everyday life in Salonika introduced the soldiers to low as well as higher culture. The number of pubs and places of entertainment was growing in order to satisfy the needs of the combatants. Their psychological state was portrayed well by a Serbian soldier who, after drinking in popular city taverns and visiting the Bara (Vardaris) district, where a large number of brothels were located during the war, stated that this was the only relief from the situation because he could die the next day (Aleksić 1988: 109). In months that were turning into years, with the severe cold of winter and unbearable heat of summertime, accompanied by mosquitoes and malaria, fighting in mud and trenches at the front, the constant uncertainty as to life and death, the threat from the enemy facing them, the fighting soldiers wanted – except in the case of battles from which they emerged as winners – to forget all the negative aspects of the war. Alcohol and a little female tenderness – which they usually sought in the streets of Bara – were the only antidote that Salonika could provide them.

As one of their images of the war, entertainment in Salonika remained a vivid memory of the combatants. Those who had an opportunity to find it at all were the lucky ones. Besides soldiers with special permission to spend a few days in the city, those who were permanently settled in Salonika during the period 1915–18 were officials in various positions (delegates, interpreters, journalists, teachers, professional actors and administrative officials), as well as those few who were released from military service. 'They are struggling badly in Thessaloniki. The beer is often missing, taverns are closing early, there isn't always a cinema… Those poor fellows are bored' (Marković 1977: 209), wrote a Serbian soldier who, like most of his comrades, had been fighting almost constantly since 1912. Another Serbian soldier wrote in his diary that in Salonika 'it was as if there was no war' (Tucović 2017: 133).

In the war years, Eleftherias Square was the epicentre of city life. Apart from concerts by the military bands that were held there, from the upper side of the square in Venizelou street to the quay and the sea were numerous restaurants, taverns and city hotels close to one another. The famous cafes Floka and Olympos Palace, the pub Crystal and many other bars on the promenade by the sea were full of guests, from half-past seven in the morning to late evening. Among numerous cafes and restaurants, Floka stood out as the most favoured meeting place for allied soldiers. They believed that – sooner or later – they would meet there all of their friends from the front. It was during the war that this famous pastry shop, which was well known for

the best chocolate in Salonika, acquired the habit of serving tea. This was especially favoured by the British soldiers and was one of the reasons why Floka was always crowded. It was common for Floka, but also in general for these cafes, to be full of combatants of different nationalities and races, but also generals, officers and ordinary soldiers who were all together under the same roof and very often sitting at the same tables.

Restaurants and taverns were appearing all around. In addition to the Greek and Jewish establishments, restaurants adopted allied cuisines and were using French, English, Italian and Serbian names in order to attract customers of all nationalities. Thus there were restaurants such as the Verdun (at 29, Nikis Avenue), Bastasini in the Rome hotel, Olympos Palace with international cuisine, Sarrail restaurant in the park near the White Tower, Alhambra with French and Italian cuisine, a Serbian-French restaurant at the hotel Imperial Palace and so on. There appears to have been another Serbian-French restaurant at the Central hotel on Nikis Avenue. On the same avenue, there were restaurants of Serbian national cuisine – Sloboda, next to the Olympos Palace hotel; Belgrade, and above it Avala, at number 35. While Avala attracted customers with two billiard tables, Belgrade and Kolumbo nearby, in addition to traditional Serbian coffee, served meals prepared with lard, which the Serbian soldiers preferred to olive oil.

In city taverns and restaurants, soldiers could enjoy sweet wine from Samos, which was served all over the place, the wines of Boutari and Tyrnavo, Nahmias brandy and Barbaresco cognac and smoke their favourite cigarettes, Salonica and Venizelos. The drinks were significantly diluted and, on General Sarrail's orders, to prevent soldiers from getting drunk, tavern keepers were forbidden to serve them alcohol except for wine and beer. So a casual passer-by on the streets of Salonika could notice that soldiers in local taverns and cafes were drinking 'necessary' aperitifs from coffee cups, or whisky and soda from large teacups. The 'necessary' aperitifs, as well as cigarettes, were essential for soldiers in those hard times. A few months after the Serbian troops had disembarked in Mikra, a German airplane bombed a naval convoy that was approaching the harbour and a ship carrying tobacco was sunk. The consequence was a terrible lack of cigarettes in the whole city. One Serbian soldier described the state of his smoker companions, who remained without nicotine for days: 'The *poor* German who bombed the ship with tobacco didn't hear so many curses and swearwords even when he was invading Serbia' (Korda 1937: 216). No one complained about the lack of other supplies.

As the well-known cafes and restaurants remained closed during the night, the troops generally moved to the park near the White Tower (between the tower and today's Royal Theatre), which was the gathering place for evening entertainment. After evening concerts in the park, which were held daily, as well as occasional cinematographic projections, from 7 pm to 9 pm and from 9 pm to midnight, soldiers who wanted to continue their night out visited the White Tower saloon, just a few steps away. This saloon,

characterized as a place where the general rule was 'bad dancing, bad singing, bad beer, and even worse champagne at an excessive price' (Mann 1920: 24), was always full, as was the case with all the other night bars on Nikis Avenue. The soldiers' evening entertainment, involving excessive consumption of alcoholic beverages, was often interrupted by the police in the early morning hours. One Serbian soldier who experienced nightlife in Salonika saved from oblivion this picture of the party in 'La Tour Blanche', as soldiers called this famous saloon near the White Tower among themselves:

> [Soldiers] mostly healthy young men, living in wartime from day to day, were instinctively looking for some joy and respite. And then Thessaloniki was… full of life and entertainment: theatres, cinemas, music halls, cafés chantants, tavernas and other cafes… After the show, the businessmen and other respectable people left, and the merrymakers and lovers stayed on in the hall and the booths with their chosen ones and with the tarts of the music halls. The heavy drinking, singing, dancing and merrymaking only started then. Two Scotsmen climbed over a table to get to a booth, while a waitress pulled at their kilts. Russian officers danced the Kozochok, Serbian cavalrymen were riding chairs in the hall. English soldiers poured champagne into women's mouths and décolletés.
>
> (Đorđević 1967: 127)

The insatiable appetite of the soldiers for entertainment did not go unnoticed by the city residents. British soldiers, and the Russians somewhat later, were known for frequent and excessive alcohol consumption. The residents of Salonika adored them, as they often provided amusement for the locals. After a lot of drinks, British soldiers often fell victims to local thieves and walked half-naked around the streets until they were picked up by the military police. Military camps with a great amount of war material were other favoured targets of thieves. In one case that remained in the memory of city residents, four robbers who had stolen a military tent could not understand why it was so heavy; until they realized that along with the tent they had 'lifted' an English soldier, who was fast asleep. The so-called Johnny had returned drunk to the camp after his night out and fell asleep in the tent.

Evening entertainment in Salonika inevitably included the Bara area, with its brothels. With the arrival of the Allies, this district – previously called Kazina – turned into the largest disreputable neighbourhood in the Balkans. During the period 1915–18, this part of the city became enormously popular, and the demand was so huge that women of different ages and nationalities provided their services in order to meet the soldiers' needs. All around the brothels in Bara, taverns and cafes could be found at every step, where pimps and brothel owners would spend their time, together with hashish dealers, hookah users and various small-scale swindlers, most of whom were card cheats. In such cafes, 'not a day passed without a fight,

injuries, even murders in which various bullies and social scum were involved' (Stamboulis 1984: 364). Brothels were open round-the-clock, and as soon as night fell, a recognizable red lantern was lit in front of the house, as a sign that it was open to visitors. One Serbian soldier wrote in his diary that Vardaris Square was full of brothels:

> There were as many prostitutes as you could wish. Greek women, the most beautiful Greek women […] The entrance cost was 10 drachmas. As soon as a soldier returned to the front after a leave in Thessaloniki, the others would ask him: 'Did you go to the Vardar division?'
>
> (Đorđević 1988: 152)

After the Great Fire, about 6.000 Jews moved to a part of the city called Rezi, in the immediate vicinity of Bara district. Because of the night-time harassment by soldiers who were knocking on doors in the mistaken belief that they were brothels, disgruntled householders started hanging boards above their doorways: 'Attention, family lives here' or just 'Family house' (Mazower 2006: 461–2). Sex workers were under the continuous control of the Army of the Orient Staff, who forbade them to move freely around the city and brought in a regulation providing for compulsory weekly medical examinations. The numerous advertisements in all the allied newspapers of that period, in which doctors were offering treatment for sexually transmitted diseases (STD), are a good indicator of the effectiveness of the methods applied by the Staff, as well as the large number of soldiers who were buying some female tenderness. In addition to the Venereal diseases hospital and doctors who were working in smaller private clinics all over the city, a whole Clinic for the treatment of syphilis, gonorrhoea and skin diseases was established in October 1916. The incidence of quarrels, and even serious injuries due to the brothels, may also be a measure of the great interest of soldiers. According to an Irish source, the first Irishman who lost his life on the Macedonian Front fell not in battle but as the victim of a stabbing after a fight with another soldier over a prostitute (Information from Professor Conor Mulvagh, University of Dublin, in lecture in Belgrade, 14 March 2018, entitled 'Forgotten Front: Ireland, Serbia and the Macedonian Front').

In relation to the brothels in Salonika, a certain difference was observed between Serbian soldiers and other members of the allied armies, reflected in the smaller number of Serbian visitors to the Bara area of the city. Superstition was a powerful motivating force for Serbian soldiers, deeply rooted in the everyday life of simple village people, who easily fell prey to it. Superstitions are also evident in other cases, e.g., Serbian soldiers were certainly the only Europeans on the Macedonian Front who, despite all the pain during an operation, refused anaesthesia believing that it might deprive them of a few years of life. Owing to a lack of education and gullibility, Serbs believed that oranges were poisoned fruit since a soldier had passed away a

few minutes after eating one. The truth was that after the retreat through Albania, the stomachs of exhausted soldiers were hardly able to digest food and at first they were dying even after a light meal. Nevertheless, as most of them were superstitious, they avoided the 'poisoned' fruit from then on. Serbians believed that women brought bad luck in war, and that anyone who surrendered to their charms would certainly die. The Serbian writer and war participant Stanislav Krakov (2009: 180) had noticed this 'superstition' among Serbian soldiers, who firmly believed that those who 'have the money or spend time with a woman before a battle' are going to be killed. One doctor who served in the Serbian army on the Macedonian Front stated that this superstitious belief of soldiers was so deeply rooted that his medical corps did not have any problem with STDs.

Recounting his memories of Salonika during the war, one Serbian soldier confirmed this doctor's assessment: 'In Thessaloniki one could stroll to and fro, but the others told me: do not touch women during the war […] I didn't approach them, as I was warned by the older ones and I took their warnings seriously' (Pantić 1988: 155–6). In his testimony, the soldier used the term 'older ones', which could refer to either age or military rank. It is not impossible that the Serbian General Staff itself supported this superstitious belief regarding women, in order to keep its soldiers in greater battle readiness. Of course, the General Staff had a justified fear of STDs, which occasionally were widespread, especially among soldiers of the other allied forces. On the other hand, in the case of the brothels, a question that arises is the extent to which personal testimonies can be considered a reliable source. The average Serbian soldier came from a small place in the backcountry and, already by his early twenties, had taken on the role of husband and father. And while some of them made it clear that they were not 'fond of syphilis' (Protić 2014: 124–6), it is certain that there were also those who already had families, and therefore did not want to write down their impressions of the Bara district, knowing that there was always a possibility that their diary would fall into the wrong hands.

Serbians, as well as the other Allies wasted their days and almost all their military pay in visits to brothels and other places of entertainment. Besides helping the city economy, the multifaceted everyday life of soldiers created an image of the city as a centre of entertainment. In addition to many allied efforts during the war years on the Macedonian Front, such a concentration of multinational troops in one place transmitted a distorted picture of the Balkan Theatre to the rest of the world. In the summer of 1917, at a time when serious operations were not undertaken and the front had been stagnating for months, Salonika gained the title of the best holiday destination or, as it was ironically called on the other fronts, of the ideal place for a 'picnic'. The Macedonian Front was the only theatre of war that was a subject of ridicule in European musicals: 'There is no war in Salonika. If you want a holiday, go to Salonika' (Palmer 1965: 259).

However, it would be wrong to perceive the Macedonian Front only in this way. As much as Salonika was providing entertainment to soldiers, it did not change, nor could it change the reality of the war, nor the cruelties that this conflict brought. During the war, the Allies did not recognize the importance of the Macedonian Front, considering it to be secondary to the other war theatres, while after the war, the significance of the military operations and victories of the Allied Army of the Orient were not recognized or at least not given their due. Precisely because of this, the question arises whether and to what extent the allied war efforts are underestimated owing to a false image of Salonika as the ideal picnic destination. The British war correspondent George Ward Price, who witnessed the military ventures of the Allied Army, wrote vividly about this distorted picture and probably gave the most accurate description of the situation on the Macedonian Front (Ward Price 1918: 276):

> The idea that the soldier lives an easy and safe life in Macedonia is absurdly false. He works as hard as a human being can all the time, whether he is in the line or out. When he comes out it is not to go into the relative rest of billets, as in France. He is brought back a few hundred yards and sets up his bivouac shelter-tent, which is all he has as protection both against summer sun and winter snow, and digs, digs, digs eternally. There is very little leave for the soldier in the Balkans. There are battalions which have been in the front line for seven months without relief, and when you consider that our trenches are shelled every day and that patrols go out every night, seven months needs a good deal of luck to get through without hurt. As for malaria, dysentery and other diseases unknown to the soldier in France […] You are about as likely to get through the summer without malaria in the Balkans as you are to go through an English winter without catching cold.

Note

1 This chapter draws on my master's thesis, 'The First World War and Greece in the eyes of the expelled Serbian Army', and is based mainly on Serbian war diaries and memoirs, but also those of other allied soldiers. As regards primary sources, I have used Serbian and Greek archives and the press of the period.

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Part III

War of words and ideologies

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15 The image of the enemy

Greek propaganda during the Salonika campaign, 1917–18

Marina Petraki

World War I was the first global conflict in which entire nations, not just armies, were mobilized and their full resources (military, economic and psychological) put to work in the service of the nation. Civilians were required to participate in the war effort, and home-front morale, as well as the psychological state of the armed forces, came to be recognized as a significant factor in the national arsenal. As Philip Taylor (1995: 5) argued, 'this war became a bloody and relentless struggle in which sustaining morale became just as essential on both sides as sustaining the military effort'.

Inextricably linked to war propaganda were issues of war guilt, and questions concerning the 'just war', often centred on atrocities committed by the enemy. According to Alan Kramer (2017; also Kramer 2007), the term 'atrocity' describes an act of violence condemned by contemporaries as a breach of morality or of the laws and customs of war: acts perpetrated by an enemy that were 'uncivilized or barbaric', inflicted on defenceless persons. In World War I, atrocity stories became a crucial weapon for belligerent nations to convince their populations of the justice of the national cause, primarily by mobilizing hatred against the enemy and, in the case of Britain, to encourage enlistment (Welch 2012:80).

Once it became apparent that the war was not going to be 'over by Christmas', those in charge of propaganda in the belligerent states created dynamic campaigns to channel feelings such as courage, solidarity, patriotism and hatred. While not centrally coordinated, all the available mass media were employed to serve the war effort by persuading their populations as to the just cause of the struggle (Welch 2003: 25).

The occupation of Belgium by Germany was the pretext for the emergence of the British stereotype of the savage and blood-thirsty German 'Hun' and the French image of the 'Boche' as depicted on the famous poster 'The Question Mark' by Norman Lindsay (Slocombe and Steel 2015: 19). The poster presents a fearful beast with hands dripping blood reaching out to crush the globe.

Shocking stories emerged, seemingly evidenced by state-commissioned reports such as the British 'Bryce Report' (Bryce 1915), of the beastly

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looking enemy cutting off children's hands, crucifying prisoners of war, using priests as clappers in cathedral bells, and boiling corpses to make soap. These provided the springboard for Allied propaganda to launch a moral offensive against the German enemy. The violation of women carried special weight in propaganda, since it related to wholly innocent victims, underlining the enemy's barbarity and lawlessness, and representing a violation of the sanctity of the home and the family unit (Gullace 1997: 722–3).

Millions of posters (12 million copies of 167 designs, see Slocombe and Steel 2015) were circulated in the UK in order to shock, alert and persuade populations of the need to defend civilization and the progressive values that served as a counterpoint to German barbarity. This was to be a struggle between the forces of good and evil. German *Kultur* was cast as diverging from its original spirit: it had now come to represent ruthless inhumanity and primitive barbarism against progress, order and honour (Fox 2016). The young Rupert Brooke's (2010) words in his famous sonnet –

> Honour has come back, as a king to earth
> And nobleness walks in our ways again
> – resonated strongly with his generation.

As the casualties on the Western Front grew with the unprecedented ferocity of battle, so too were the propaganda efforts of the allies intensified, in order to promote and sustain a war that needed recruits, high morale, unity, materials and global support. In the first years of the war, the worse the atrocities reported or depicted, the greater the support by the public, signalled by the patriotic rush to enlist.

While Allied propaganda relating to the Western Front systematically built up the image of a barbaric enemy based mostly on press accounts and exaggerated reports, the situation was different on the Macedonian front. Here French and British forces were fighting a combined German-Austrian-Hungarian and Bulgarian army which, in 1916, overran Serbia, forcing the Serbian army and thousands of refugees to retreat to the Adriatic Sea and thence to Corfu (Mann 1920; Palmer 2009). Atrocities against the population, the extent of which has not been fully researched, accompanied the Austro-Hungarian invasions of Serbia in 1914–15. According to Kramer, the Habsburg leadership admitted later that there had been widespread violence and 'pointless reprisals' (Kramer 2017). On similar lines, Antoine Rivière (2015) claims that recent studies have shown that the Bulgarian occupation of southern Serbia from 1915 to 1918 gave rise to ethnic violence including mass rape encouraged by officers. Unlike German atrocities in Belgium, these systematic acts of aggression committed in Serbia aroused very little reaction abroad and were not referred to in Allied propaganda.

Apart from a few posters and press accounts, largely produced by the Allied countries, referring to the martyrdom of the 'heroic Serbs', the justice of their cause, and the need for relief and solidarity, there was no substantial reference to a hateful and barbaric enemy. Nor was there any concerted propaganda effort to depict the horrifying atrocities committed by the other enemy, Turkey, against the Armenian populations in the attempt at national homogenization in Asia Minor, or the Greek populations that were expelled from the Anatolian littoral between 1914 and 1918 (Kieser 2014).[1] It is not surprising that these stories did not feature in the Allied propaganda campaigns. Allied propagandists would have been wary of detracting from a focus on the 'barbarous Hun', avoiding the creation of a complicated picture of the enemy for home-front audiences. Emotions and resentments needed to be channelled into the most effective streams and the presentation of another enemy, in the case of Turkey a victorious enemy, could only be an obstruction to the propaganda effort to justify war. The Gallipoli campaign, which seemed initially to have been so eagerly advertised by allied propaganda as a noble patriotic adventure, was ultimately silenced by the Parliamentary Recruiting Committee (PRC), after its devastating and humiliating outcome (Petraki 2018).

The silence becomes more pronounced where the depiction of Bulgaria as the enemy on the Macedonia Front is concerned. Whereas the alleged atrocities committed by the 'Hun' in the West had the propaganda machine 'working at full speed', the eye-witness accounts, official reports and first-hand testimonies of mass killings of civilians, violation of women, systematic deportation and violent attempts at Bulgarization that were once again being committed by the Bulgarians in the occupied Greek towns and villages of Eastern Macedonia, facilitated by the Germans, (Hatzivassiliou 2014: 141–3) were omitted from Allied propaganda. The Bulgarian 'petit boche' (Ilchev 2011: 542), and the Macedonia Front were unknown to many in the west, and the Allies' forgotten army was too far away to arouse public sympathy. This omission is the more striking considering that, after two years of internal struggle, known as the National Schism (see Mavrogordatos 2015), amidst a war of propaganda, espionage and internal struggle which led to the exile of the pro-German king Constantine and Greece's entry in the war on the Allied side in the summer of 1917, Venizelos' new Government had to justify his policy and decisions to a deeply divided nation.

The role of Greek propaganda during World War I has been by and large neglected. There is as yet no systematic analysis of the topic but only stray references within works of a more general character (see Leontaritis 2005; Ilchev 2011; Michaelides 2017). The propaganda war between the royalists and Venizelists, supported respectively by the agents of the Central and Entente powers aiming to undermine each other, marked the period 1915–17 and

helped tear the nation apart (Mackenzie 1932). This war continued abroad after Constantine's exile, with his propaganda machine working at full tilt in Switzerland and Germany to undermine Venizelos and his decision to go to war on the side of the Entente (Leontaritis 2005: 130–46). Similarly, prominent members and supporters of Venizelos' government (Georgios Kafandaris, Ioannis Gennadios, Alexandros Diomidis, Dimitrios. Kalapothakis, Athos Romanos, among others) toured European capitals and many American towns to establish a network of propaganda activities that would promote the legitimacy of Venizelos' government and justify his decision to go to war on the Allied side, aiming at the same time to secure financial support and recruits among the Greeks of Diaspora (Leontaritis 2005: 27–8, 134–5,178–80; Ilchev 2011: 226–7, 246).

The most critical issue for the new Government, following Venizelos' accession to power in summer 1917, was the deeply divided home front and the remobilization of the Greek army. Venizelos had to manage popular discontent among the royalists and Germanophiles who opposed what they believed to be a 'humiliating' war, and to contain desertion, mutiny and unrest in many parts of the country which threatened the war effort. Since the royalist component of the Greek Army had long since been demobilized, there was considerable work on reconstruction and reorganization to be carried out, especially given resistance to conscription, before the whole Greek Army could take to the front.

National unity and solidarity were the indispensable prerequisites for fighting a war and intensifying recruitment. These and the justice of the Venizelist cause had to be the main focus of a two-fold propaganda campaign deployed by Venizelos after his advent to power, directed towards both the perceived enemy within (the pro-German exiled King Constantine and the antiwar royalists) and the external enemy (the 'German-Bulgarians').

As in all belligerent countries which saw censorship as the means to control communications, Greece established strict censorship over all publications (Leontaritis 2005:152) following the imposition of martial law in August 1917 in several prefectures. This was designed to halt pro-royalist propaganda, especially the dangerous rumours emanating from Constantinist propaganda (Leontaritis 2005: 179–81). At the same time, the Venizelist newspapers portrayed a savagely hostile image of the internal enemy, the King, now in exile. The front page of the newspaper *Makedonia* declared on 26 September 1917, that

> he was not after all 'the son of the eagle' (του αετού ο γιός) as his followers believed, but a treacherous black vulture, his bloody talons dripping with the blood of Greece (…) the bloodthirsty agent of Germany which had shed the blood of Belgium and Serbia.

By contrast, the paper praised Venizelos, the Great Leader of Steel, 'Χαλύβδινος Ηγέτης', and inspiring patriot (*Makedonia* 9 January 1918). This antithesis of good against evil, a crucial element in propaganda, was widely projected so as to serve and sustain the legitimacy of the great leader Venizelos and undermine the authority and legitimacy of the so-called traitor Constantine. Other accounts spoke of the extensive black propaganda campaigns undertaken by Constantine's friend, the notorious German propagandist Baron Schenk, who paid significant amounts of money to Greek newspapers to publish lies against the allies and the war (*Makedoni*a 29 September 1918).

While government propaganda efforts at home to undermine the enemy within were mainly undertaken by the press, the official role in depicting the external enemy and simultaneously promoting national reconciliation and unity was undertaken by a Venizelist organization, 'The Patriotic Union', based in Athens at 9 Voukourestiou Street, of which the Venizelist Alexandros Kassavetis was Secretary and Georgios Averof President. This was a private and nominally independent propaganda organization working in fact, as much evidence shows, in close cooperation with the Government, notably the Ministry of Interior.

Although Greece did not need new justification for fighting the Bulgarian enemy (this was the second extremely painful Bulgarian occupation of Eastern Macedonia), the image of the brutal, savage enemy – the *Germanovoulgaros* – had to be successfully projected in order to shape and raise public morale by evoking notions of hatred, national pride, freedom and patriotism, against barbarism. An extensive propaganda campaign was instigated to reach every part of the country with emphasis on Old Greece. A great number of letters, all carrying propaganda messages, were sent to prefects, mayors, police and military authorities, teachers and church representatives introducing 'patriots and preachers devoted to the Government, highly educated and with special skills'. In a world without radio and television and with a high percentage of illiteracy, oral indoctrination by active and capable speakers became a crucial medium of persuasion. According to instructions emanating from the Prime Minister's Office, they were 'entrusted with a sacred mission, and were to deliver inspired and patriotic speeches for the education and enlightenment of the population, to serve the war effort'. The dispatch of those letters, often accompanied by leaflets containing Venizelos' inspired patriotic speeches, became more frequent at times of internal turmoil.

Venizelos' determination to achieve full mobilization of the armed forces by March 1918 was often met with discontent, desertion and riots, such as the serious Lamia mutiny in January 1918, which led the government to take punitive measures (*Makedonia* 27 January 1918; Karapetsas 2015). The uprising of 'anti-national gangs' (*Makedonia* 27 January 1918) was severely

condemned by the press, which emphasized the outrage of the people at the actions of the mutineers, 'whom their embarrassed parents were escorting back to the barracks' (*Estia* 25 January 1918).

Special coverage was given to King Alexander's support for the Government and his denunciation of the rebels. Leading articles covered Venizelos' and the King's visits to the front and the affection in which they were held by the heroic army (*Makedonia* 28 January 1918), while front page images of the personified Victory prophesied the imminent success of the Greek army (*Patris* 1 and 14 January 1918). The Patriotic Union also undertook the production of newspapers that were sent to the front, such as the *Newspaper of the Front,* and books, leaflets and photos 'for the patriotic education of the soldiers'. Towards the end of 1917, intensifying in 1918, a series of propaganda posters were produced and dispatched all over Greece with instructions to the police to ensure, 'even by force', that they were displayed in public offices, town squares, schools, buses, army depots, and shops. The posters' value lay in their eye-catching format and the simple messages conveyed even to the illiterate, who in Greece at the time amounted to almost 45% of the population.

The posters which depicted and ridiculed the enemy held special significance. The stereotype of the blood-thirsty *Germanovoulgaros* was used not only to impute war guilt to the enemy but also to reinforce noble Greek values such as heroism and solidarity, and to contrast such values with inhumanity and aggression. In one (see Figure 15.1, p. 179), a Bulgarian soldier steps on the naked bodies of women and children. In his left hand he holds the head of a woman dripping blood, implying her violation. In the background there is fire and total destruction, and at the top the word 'Bulgarianism'. Through posters like this, rumours about Bulgarian atrocities were given visual form and savagery was personified, reinforcing pre-existing beliefs and the negative perception of the enemy. The message was aimed at the whole population of the country. The nation was obliged and encouraged to defend civilization and halt enemy aggression and brutality.

Following the victory of the Greek army and the Allies at Skra de Legen in May 1918, the newspapers published accounts of heroic Greek soldiers and testimonies of defeated Bulgarian prisoners which conveyed an image of a bear-like enemy, dirty, unshaven and barefoot, a cowardly, starving *arkoudiaris*, who was overcome by the gallant and noble Greek soldier, proud and willing to die for his country (*Nea Alitheia* 14 May 1918; *Patris* 21 May 1918; *Estia* 22 and 27 May 1918). Posters with relevant images were widely circulated to maintain morale, cohesion and a willingness to fight (see Figures 15.2–15.4, pp. 180–181).

By arousing fear of the enemy and tapping into pre-existing prejudices, Greek propaganda aimed to justify the war and reconcile the Greek nation to action, by promoting national pride, patriotism and heroism.

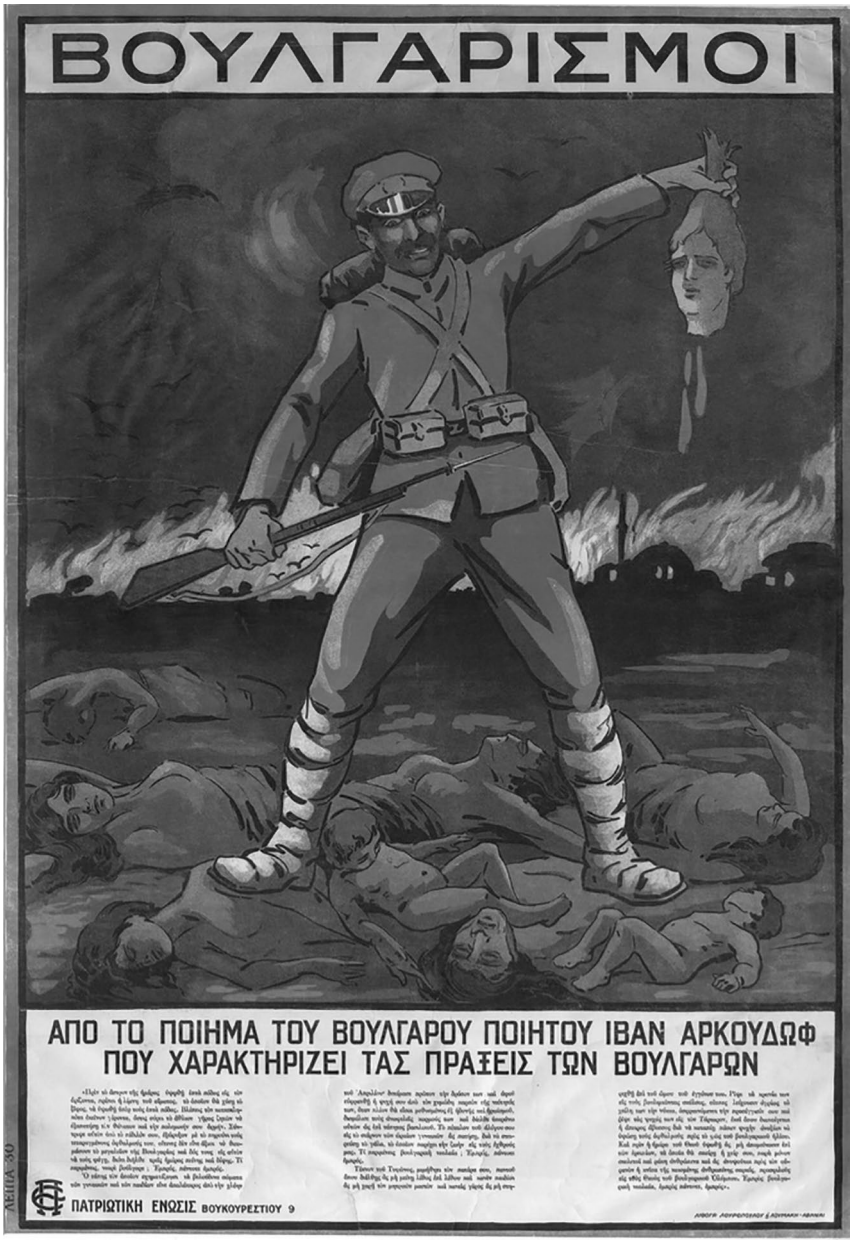

Figure 15.1 Patriotic Union Poster: Bulgarianism. From the poem of the Bulgarian poet Ivan 'The Bear' which characterizes the actions of the Bulgarians.

Source: Ephemera collection, Greek Literary and Historical Archive of the National Bank of Greece Cultural Foundation.

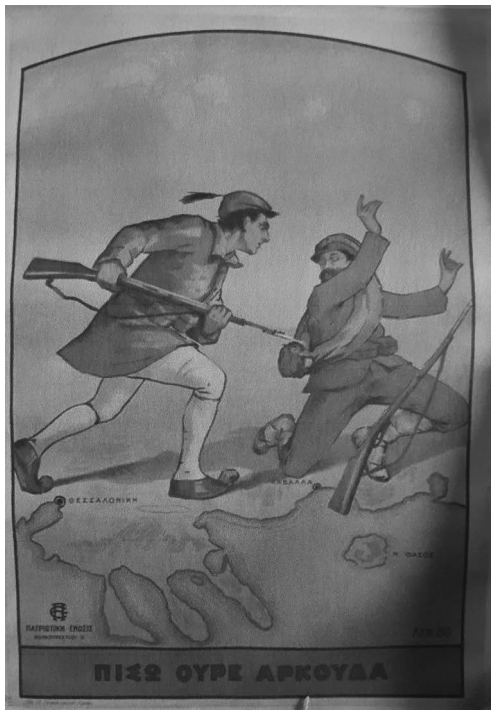

Figure 15.2 Patriotic Union Poster: Back off Bear.
Source: Ephemera collection, Greek Literary and Historical Archive of the National Bank of Greece Cultural Foundation.

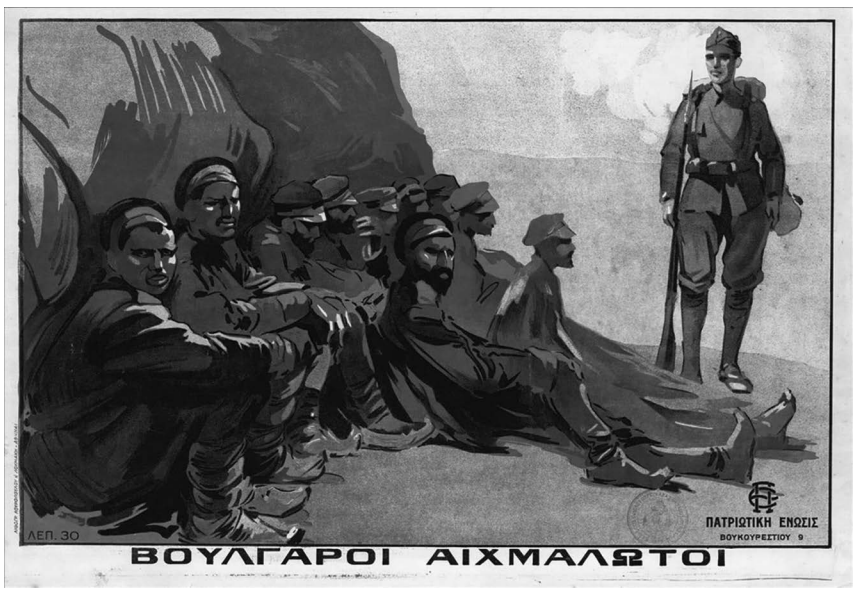

Figure 15.3 Patriotic Union Poster: Bulgarian Prisoners.
Source: Ephemera collection, Greek Literary and Historical Archive of the National Bank of Greece Cultural Foundation.

Figure 15.4 Patriotic Union Poster: The MOTHERLAND is calling you here brave soldier.

Source: Ephemera collection, Greek Literary and Historical Archive of the National Bank of Greece Cultural Foundation.

Conclusion

It took more than propaganda to unite and mobilize the nation's resources. Although propagandists in World War I in different countries used similar themes and methods, the situation in Greece was dictated by very specific and local circumstances. Propaganda had to work hard not only to assist in the defeat of an external enemy but also to heal very deep internal divisions even before effective mobilization could take place. As in other campaigns, there was an effort to invoke historic animosities in a nation that was on the brink of civil war. The lack of enthusiasm for war among a large part of the Greek people and the Government's oppressive actions against those who opposed the war (Leontaritis 2005: 210–20) suggest that, despite extensive efforts, propaganda was not successful in persuading the whole population to serve the war effort.

The black image of the enemy was insufficient by itself to sustain the war effort, while an integrated propaganda campaign to mobilize for war proved inadequate, since it lacked a compelling common cause for a nation a large part of which perceived the state itself as the enemy. Internal political tensions, which obstructed the work of the propaganda machine, were complicated by economic exhaustion, food shortages, ('the state needs

money, the people need food') (Leontaritis 2005: 178–9), soaring prices, deprivations and moral suffering. These eroded patriotic appeals and popular confidence and led to military unrest, pacifism and indifference at the home front as well as on the battlefields.

The events that followed the end of the war, although Greece was on the victorious side, proved that the nation was still deeply divided. Propaganda ultimately played little part, if any, in justifying war or in healing political tensions.

Note

1 In Britain however Lord Bryce and Arnold Toynbee published a documented account of Turkish atrocities towards the Armenians (Bryce and Toynbee 1916). The Anglo-Hellenic League in London helped to publicize the Turkish deportations of Greeks from the Turkish western littoral.

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16 'The history of the Balkan policy of the Allies is a series of intangible mistakes'

Ernst von Falkenhausen and his perceptions of the Balkan Front

Nicole Immig

The history of German–Greek relations in World War I has been approached almost exclusively in terms of diplomatic history. Usually these accounts concentrate on the activities of German diplomatic representatives in Athens from 1914 to 1916 (see Leontaritis 1974, 1990). This is linked to internal Greek policies as well as to the role of Greece in the south-eastern European theatre of war, determining not only the focus of research on Athens as the main space of diplomatic affairs, but also the period of analysis from 1914 to 1916, but neglecting the time span from 1916 to 1918. My chapter widens this analytical framework by considering the role of the German military attaché in Athens, Ernst von Falkenhausen, who was one of the main official German diplomatic representatives in Athens in the period 1914–16. In his function as a soldier and military pilot after 1916, he again engaged with the Macedonian Front in various ways. By adopting a biographical approach based on his diary,[1] and thus integrating fresh archival material, I hope to offer new perspectives on a rather neglected theatre of war in south-eastern Europe.[2] Rather than presenting general conclusions my aim in this chapter is to give some first insights into the mindset of Ernst von Falkenhausen and his perceptions of the Macedonian Front.

In Athens 1914–16

Greece's political position at the outbreak of the war in 1914, soon developed into a major domestic conflict between Prime Minister Venizelos and the Greek king and his political advisers over entry into the war or neutrality. Labelled by later historiography the national schism/*Ethnikos Dichasmos*, the conflict dominated the international diplomatic stage in the Greek capital. This was partly due to the fact that representatives of all belligerent states were able to remain in Athens at least until December 1916.

Arriving in Athens in April 1914, in his post as German military attaché Ernst von Falkenhausen acted as diplomatic and political mediator between Berlin, the Greek court and the Greek government, arguing in favour of Greek neutrality. He was in close contact with Greek politicians as well as Athens-based German political and cultural circles, and established

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friendly and very intimate relationships with the Greek royal family, keeping in touch through regular correspondence with Queen Sophia and other members of the family even after they had been expelled from Greece in 1917.[3] Falkenhausen was an ardent admirer of the royal family and the king. He believed strongly that Constantine was sincerely devoted to the good of his country, as opposed to Venizelos, whom he described as 'a perfidious Cretan lawyer' and a 'gang leader' rather than a true politician in his publication *The strangulation of Greece*. This was published in the late summer of 1918 as the last book in the series of Ullstein-Kriegsbücher (Falkenhausen 1918: 110). Using this term 'strangulation' constantly in the book, Falkenhausen recounted the political situation in Athens and in Greece from 1914 to the beginning of 1918, developing the theme that little Greece was a victim of allied politics.

Emphasizing the position of Greece as a victim, the *Vossische Zeitung*, one of Germany's leading daily newspapers at the time, called the manuscript a 'book of disgrace for the Great Powers, which made promises every day only to break them'.[4] According to the conservative *Kreuz-Zeitung*, Falkenhausen reminded readers of allied propaganda concerning Belgium and pictured vividly the 'series of constant violations'[5] of Greece, the small country, by the Entente, stressing that the Greek people stood united behind the king in resisting the seductive plots of allied propaganda.

Falkenhausen was convinced that the Entente allies would do anything to persuade the Greek government to enter the war on their side. He wrote that 'whatever was opposed to the fulfilment of this goal, had to fall' (Falkenhausen 1918: 119), and that 'every open minded and perceptive person must realize that a fight against King Constantine was a fight against the greater part of the Greek nation' (Falkenhausen 1918: 126). Falkenhausen despised the French and his French colleagues in Athens, calling them 'delegates of French puffed-up vanity'. He was convinced that the French were working only for their own interests, spreading untruthful and inaccurate information. He accused them of 'malicious and black-hearted distortion of facts' to deceive the public and the world, which he considered characteristic of allied and French policies in Greece and in the Balkans in general.[6]

At the Macedonian Front 1916–18

As an experienced diplomat, military adviser and close friend and confidant of the royal family, Falkenhausen was involved in German propaganda affairs in the period 1914–16. In December 1916 together with other Germans living in Athens he was expelled from Greece and had to leave the country. Along with a number of German businessmen and archaeologists they were considered by the allies 'dangerous insiders' in Greek affairs, actively involved in German propaganda. However, some of these insiders and specialists remained in the wider area, because of their intimate knowledge of affairs, their familiarity with the region and their contacts in Greece. It was

in this role as an insider and as a military man that Falkenhausen returned to the Balkan theatre of war.

Following his expulsion from Athens, Falkenhausen was originally sent to Berlin. Here he realised that he could be of more use on the spot and returned on a secret mission to Macedonia. He established himself first with the Imperial Flying Corps from January 1917 in Prilep and in Pogradec, and again, from July to November 1918, in Drama, where he was engaged mainly in the production of aerial photographs of the enemy front-lines in Macedonia (Neumann 2011: 499; see also Bachinger 2012: 284–305). It seems that Falkenhausen was convinced that in Macedonia he could be extraordinarily useful in two ways: first, because he was a diplomatic insider with intimate knowledge of Greek affairs and second, because he was considered so by the Greek royal family, and in particular by Queen Sophia.[7] Private correspondence from Sophia, personal accounts as well as photographs in Falkenhausen's diary, confirm their close relationship, as does the inclusion of a fragment of Sophia's personal 'diary' in his account.[8]

Falkenhausen considered himself and was viewed by the German General Staff as a person of complete and unquestionable confidence.[9] In his function as military attaché in Athens he had repeatedly warned the German General Staff that an offensive by German and Bulgarian forces in Macedonia could damage Germany's relations with Greece, and persistently objected to this idea in the period of his service in Athens. For strategic reasons the German General Head Quarters and the responsible German Chief of Staff, General Erich von Falkenhayn, rejected the idea of overrunning Salonika in 1915 and 1916, and did not approve a further offensive against Serbia or the Allied Army in Salonika, although it seems that this had been discussed at various points during the course of the war and Falkenhausen was included in these discussions.[10] Rather, they wanted to withdraw troops from the Balkan front (Kirch 1928: 3–4).

However, with the changing political situation in Greece, the installation of the allies in Salonika and the establishment of a separate government by Venizelos, Falkenhausen began to believe in the possibility of a German–Greek offensive on the Macedonian Front. He voiced this opinion at various meetings in military circles in 1917, speaking with Ludendorff and Hindenburg shortly before and after his expulsion from Athens. Finally, he actually persuaded these circles in 1917 to reconsider an offensive on condition that Greece joined Germany in such an attack.[11] Hence, in combination with his profession as an aviator he would serve in January 1917 as a significant middleman between the royal family and the German General Staff in the Balkans, by providing the German Military Staff with direct information from the Greek king about his stand on a possible united German–Greek offensive on the Macedonian Front. This was crucial since all channels to Athens had been cut or were censored and controlled after the expulsions of the representatives of the Central Powers in late November 1916. He proved his reliability by flying on 9 January 1917 from Prilep to Larissa, which was

held by pro-royalist Greek forces, and to some areas controlled by the Allies. In Larissa he was able to establish a direct telephone connection with the King, speaking to both Constantine and Sophia (Mühlmann 1942: 185–6). We can only guess the exact content of this conversation. But as he recalls in his diary, gaining information on the attitude of the Greek king towards a German offensive plan on the Salonika front was one of the main goals of the call.

We know that the mission to convince the king failed, and Falkenhausen returned to Macedonia. Shortly after, concerned about the future of military operations on the Macedonian Front, he instigated the employment of Italo-Albanian bands in the Macedonian border region which could be used against French and allied troops on the Balkan front. Falkenhausen insisted on the effectiveness of guerrilla tactics in warfare, since 'early small successes will quickly become known to the Greek population, and with their incredible animosity towards the Entente powers, this operation will soon develop and achieve much greater successes on the back of our enemies'. Here again he underlined his expert status in the region. He wrote that similar operations should be led by him in person, 'whom the Greeks know, because the Greek, by character, would treat a stranger with great distrust'.[12] He even claimed that it was his presence which Athens saw as 'a sure guarantee for the future which is why, despite all the pressures from the Entente, Athens does not lose heart".[13] His operations and initiatives on the Macedonian theatre of war were not rewarded with success. Shortly after this, Falkenhausen left Macedonia and was sent to Flanders to join the General Staff.[14]

Professional views and personal experiences

In the fifth year of the war, which he claimed 'must finally bring about a decision',[15] he returned to Macedonia to the Flying corps in Drama.[16] In August 1918, the possibility of the Germans marching on Salonika together with Greek forces came up again.[17] Falkenhausen was confident that there was at least a slight chance that the war on the Macedonian Front could be revived. He was however doubtful about future cooperation with the Bulgarians. His comments suggest that in the summer of 1918 relations between Germans and Bulgarians became nearly unbearable: 'I am not sure how long we are going to be able to cope with the Bulgarians. The Bulgarians are all becoming more and more impertinent and disrespectful'.[18] He even declared that 'It would be best to launch together with the Romanians and the Turks a war against the Bulgarians'.[19] This attitude seems to have been based on a personal dislike of Germany's partners stemming from their unprofessional military attitude but also on a strong conviction of their cultural inferiority: 'I find these people disgusting and only go there if it is unavoidable. No man of culture can put up with them'.[20] It was mainly the intolerable behaviour of the Bulgarians towards the local populations which Falkenhausen

complained about: 'It would take too long to record all the acts they have perpetrated. They ravage, steal and plunder, and they leave nothing to the local inhabitants. […] Everything of any value is going to Bulgaria'.[21]

According to Falkenhausen people in the regions of Demir Hisar[22] especially, but also Kavalla and Drama, were suffering greatly from hunger and were only cheered by the arrival of German troops because this brought them a slight hope of getting food. He was convinced that this could not be remedied, since the Germans had difficulty supplying food and water to their own troops.[23] He depicted the situation in Kavalla in particular in the darkest colours: 'Kavalla is totally dead. Greeks and Turks have been deported. Bulgaria is colonizing!'[24] He wrote that the Greek population especially was not only being deported from the city, but 'systematically exterminated'.[25] In September 1918, the withdrawal of German and Bulgarian troops appeared more and more inevitable since he believed the Bulgarians were steadily deserting their positions. He complained in his diary that the pretext for the Bulgarian retreat was lack of ammunition, but he thought this was untrue.[26] Finally in the critical months of late 1918, Falkenhausen found himself part of the German general staff.

As a pilot in the Field Flier Detachment, Falkenhausen saw the Macedonian Front from different points of view. His main task was to provide the German military staff with basic military information on enemy bases, supplies, equipment and troop movements through the aerial photographs he took. Included in his diary are a number of aerial photographs of Drama, Kavala and other cities of Macedonia, which to date have not been published or analysed by historians and which may offer important insights into the history of the region in World War I. Falkenhausen was very aware of his professional task as an aerial pilot in providing tools for military surveillance of the area, since he regarded the existing cartographic material is very poor. As part of the royal flying corps in Macedonia he occupied a hybrid sphere of professional experience as a pilot combined with personal adventure. While staying in Macedonia he published several articles and short stories in the German local press, but also in the German trench newspaper *Kriegszeitung Heeresgruppe von Below*. Unlike in his publication in the Ullstein-Kriegsbuch series, he described the natural beauties of the Macedonian landscapes as seen from high in the air. Through such thrilling stories from a German military pilot shooting aerial photos of the emerging enemy lines, he contributed to a well-established literary genre, satisfying the desire for adventure stories by eyewitnesses directly from the frontlines (Esposito 2011).

Tourist soldier

Falkenhausen viewed the Balkans and the Macedonian theatre of war from a personal angle as a soldier and a 'visitor' to a well-known but also foreign and exotic country which he captured with his camera. The large number of

photographs of 'tourist' value in the diary, do not necessarily illustrate the respective diary entries, but do tell us of his broad interest in the region over and above his military profession. Equipped by education and knowledge of ancient Greece, and with his own camera, he had a 'tourist soldier's' eye for the remains of ancient Greek culture in the region, and for the landscape and the peasant population. He catches various market scenes in Drama and Kavalla, while looking for the exotic, oriental Greece by photographing the Serres mosque and its old Turkish cemetery as well as streets in Drama.

Falkenhausen is certainly an intriguing and talented figure. He was a rather unusual and perhaps unique example of a German diplomat and soldier, at the same time pilot and visitor, closely involved in Greek–German political relations. As German military attaché, experienced diplomat and political intermediary in Athens from 1914 to 1916, he was vigorously involved in diplomatic affairs and negotiations, and in the war of words and propaganda. With his military training and as a pilot of the Imperial German Flying Corps from 1916 to 1918 he was actively engaged in the warfare at the Macedonian Front and thus a pragmatic professional eye-witness. His perceptions, views and experiences give insights not only into political developments but also into the everyday lives of the Macedonian region, and the Macedonian and home fronts.

Notes

1 The personal diary of Ernst von Falkenhausen consists of 41 volumes and is held by the German Military Archive in Freiburg; hereafter BArch (Bundesarchiv) N 2068, Folio (date).
2 According to Afflerbach (2005: 53–66, 54), the German general headquarters viewed south-eastern Europe as an important, but secondary theatre of war, which was seen as an important factor for the outcome of the war. One of the main goals of German diplomatic and military circles was to convince Greece to participate either on the side of the Central Powers or to remain neutral.
3 BArch N 2068/31, Fol. 2 (23 November 1916).
4 BArch N 2068/38 (16 July 1918) (Vossische Zeitung, 10 July 1918).
5 BArch N 2068/39 (17 July 1918) (Kreuzzeitung, 16 July 1918).
6 BArch N 2068/39 (17 July 1918) (Kreuzzeitung, 16 July 1918).
7 BArch N 2068/31 F. 14-16 (29 November 1916).
8 Even in his time in Flanders he was constantly receiving information on Greek affairs in newspapers etc. from the queen or other members of the royal family. BArch N 2068/39 (*La Feuille*, 5 August 1918).
9 Falkenhausen mentions that in diplomatic and royal circles he was named 'the Athenian'. BArch N 2068/38, F. 50 (25 July 1918).
10 BArch N 2068/31 F. 16-21 (1 December 1916).
11 BArch N 2068/31 F 18 (1 December 1916).
12 BArch N 2068/32 F 49-50 (19 February 1917).
13 BArch N 2068/32 F. 51-53 (18 February 1917).
14 While in Flanders he nevertheless remained emotionally devoted to Greek affairs, maintaining a steady correspondence with his flying comrades from Macedonia, who were providing him with photographs from Macedonia. BArch N 2068/39 F. 82-86 (13 July 1917).

15 BArch N 2068/39 F. 52 (1 August 1918).
16 Concerning the Bulgarian occupation, see Opfer 2005.
17 BArch N 2068/39 F. 59 (4 August 1918).
18 BArch N 2068/38 F. 81 (22 August 1918).
19 BArch N 2068/38 F. 61 (5 August 1918).
20 BArch N 2068/38 F. 80 (22 August 1918).
21 BArch N 2068/38 F. 80 (22 August 1918).
22 Demir Hisar (meaning Iron Mountain) north east of Serres is the modern Sidirokastro. There is another Demir Hisar in North Macedonia, north east of Bitola.
23 BArch N 2068/38 F. 88 (4 September 1918).
24 BArch N 2068/38 F. 82-83 (23 August 1918).
25 BArch N 2068/38 F. 81 (22 August 1918).
26 BArch N 2068/39 F. 21 (29 September 1918).

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17 The Macedonian Front, the Great Idea and the 'weaponization' of antiquities

Richard Clogg

Kostas Kostis (2018: 247) has pointed out that Greece is perhaps the only country in Europe that does not hold official events to mark the end of World War I. One of the reasons for this is that Greece, despite the astonishing victories and the resulting massive increases in both territory and population secured under the premiership of the charismatic Eleftherios Venizelos during the Balkan wars of 1912–13 (Mazower 1992: 885–904), continued to have ambitious and unfulfilled war aims when the armistice with the Bulgarians on the Macedonian Front was signed on 29 September 1918.

To get an insight into the mindset of many in the Greek armed forces that formed part of the heterogeneous allied coalition deployed in the Macedonian campaign, and indeed of many non-military nationalists, at this critical juncture in the history of Greece, it is instructive to consider the views of Colonel Nikolaos Plastiras, one of Greece's most renowned soldiers. Plastiras had participated in the Goudi putsch of 1909, which had projected the Cretan Venizelos to the forefront of the political stage. Plastiras' military reputation had been established during the Balkan wars and was further enhanced by his exploits during the Macedonian campaign, in particular in the battle of Skra di Legen. Acquiring the soubriquet of the Mavros Kavallaris or the Black Horseman, he went on to become one of the most important of the soldier politicians of Greece during the first half of the 20th century and was the prime mover in the military coup of 1922 that overthrew King Constantine I following the Asia Minor 'catastrophe'. In 1945, in the immediate aftermath of the December 1944 fighting in Athens between units of ELAS, the communist-controlled resistance army, and government forces and the British troops who had accompanied the government-in-exile on its return to the country, Plastiras was briefly prime minister. This was an office which he held for a longer period in 1951–52, when he adopted a relatively conciliatory policy towards those defeated in the civil war that had wracked the country between 1946 and 1949.

At the behest of Penelope Delta, the author, historian and great admirer of Venizelos, Plastiras wrote a detailed account of the involvement of the 5/42nd regiment, of which he was the commander, in the Ukrainian campaign which followed the Macedonian armistice. This was part of the

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unsuccessful international attempt to crush the recently established Bolshevik revolution in Russia. Plastiras' account offers striking evidence of the way in which, for the many Greeks who were passionate followers of Venizelos, the defeat of the Central Powers on the Macedonian Front was viewed not as the end of hostilities but rather as the beginning of a final attempt to achieve the irredentist aspirations of those, and they were many, who believed in the *Megali Idea*, the Great Idea, of expanding the Greek state through the incorporation of many of the considerable Greek populations in the Near East outside the bounds of the Greek kingdom that constituted, to use the evocative Greek term, *I kath'imas Anatoli*, or 'the Greek East'.

The Hellenised Vlach Ioannis Kolettis, in a speech delivered at the Constituent Assembly in 1844, in which the first constitution of independent Greece was debated, is thought to have been the first to use the expression *I Megali Idea* (Dimaras 1970: 8). The economist Nassau Senior (1859: 356, 358) recorded that, during his visit to Greece and Turkey in late 1857 and early 1859, an unnamed Athenian Greek, 'a literary man of some reputation', had told him

> do not think … that we consider this corner of Greece as our country, or Athens as our capital, or the Parthenon as our national temple. The Parthenon belongs to an age and to a religion with which we have no sympathy. Our country is the vast territory of which Greek is the language, and the faith of the orthodox Greek church is the religion. Our capital is Constantinople; our national temple is Santa Sophia, for nine hundred years the glory of Christendom. As long as that temple, that capital, and that territory are profaned and oppressed by Mussulmans, Greece would be disgraced if she were tranquil.

At the funeral of King George I, who had been assassinated in 1913 in Thessaloniki by a madman, the archbishop of Athens in his funeral oration hailed George's successor, Constantine I, in the following terms: 'thou bearest the name of Constantine and art the heir of Constantine the Eleventh, the last Emperor of Constantinople' (Rankin 1914: 386).

Aspirations of this kind appeared to most non-Greek observers to be unrealistically grandiose. One such, William Miller (1905: 44), a sympathetic, perceptive, well informed and scholarly historian and journalist, wrote that Greece in the late 19th and early 20th centuries had the appetites of a Russia but the resources of a Switzerland. Nor were the irredentist aspirations of the Venizelists universally shared in Greece itself. In 1915–16 Greece had been convulsed by the *Ethnikos Dikhasmos* or National Schism. On the outbreak of World War I, Venizelos had sought to bring Greece into the war on the side of the Entente Powers in the belief they would be victorious and were more likely to support Greece's irredentist ambitions than the Central Powers. But he had met with resistance on the part of King Constantine

I, who sought to keep Greece out of the war and who enjoyed the support of a significant segment of the population. The increasingly bitter conflict between the Venizelists and Royalists threatened to result in a civil war. The Entente Powers ousted Constantine from the throne and installed Venizelos as prime minister. In 1917 he enthusiastically aligned Greece with the Entente Powers and he and his supporters hoped that Greece would in time be rewarded for their unflinching support for the Entente cause (Petsalis-Diomedis 1978; Mavrogordatos 2015).

In covering the period after the Bulgarian armistice at the beginning of his account of the Ukrainian campaign, Plastiras (1979: 1) wrote that:

> All of us who had spent many nerve-wracking months in the trenches [on the Macedonian Front] breathed a sigh of relief, because at last we saw that our labours would bear fruit and that in a short while our age old dreams and patriotic yearnings would be fulfilled. The Greek army would enter Sofia [the Bulgarian capital] and *I Polis* [the City of Constantinople] as a conqueror.
>
> *Sofia and the City*! These words were continually on the lips of our soldiers. Every little while we said 'and on to Sofia, and on to the City'. Each one of us was convinced that this was an end to the struggles, age long struggles, bloody, hard, and nerve-wracking. For this reason, the pursuit took place in unrestrained haste so as to arrive one hour earlier at the final goal.

But, Plastiras continued, when Greek forces reached the border with Bulgaria a sudden order from the overall commander of the Macedonian Front, General Franchet d'Espérey, brought the Greek advance to an abrupt halt. 'Sorrow', Plastiras wrote, 'was etched on all our faces! Our prayer was not to be answered'. 'We considered it unjust that after such struggles our allies … chose only the forces of the three allied Great Powers [Britain, France and Italy] for the occupation of Sofia and Constantinople'.

The regiment was then forced to camp on the outskirts of Gevgeli and to kick its heels for a few months before being despatched to join the large Greek contingent, some 23,000 strong, in the expedition to Ukraine.

Plastiras continued to dream of 'a great and prosperous homeland, which would soon re-establish the Byzantine Empire'. This dream was based, on the one hand, on the complete disintegration and dissolution of the Turkish state and, on the other, the support of Greece's wartime allies. Plastiras envisaged that as a result of Greece's participation in the Ukrainian expedition the allies could be expected to assist in Greece's acquisition of Thrace and Asia Minor.

In a speech to his regiment before departing for the Ukraine, Plastiras (1979: 11) was bitterly critical of King Constantine for obstructing Greece's participation in World War I. If the king had not blocked Venizelos' aspirations, he argued, Greece would already have been in possession of

Constantinople and Smyrna. 'Today we would not have to face other battles, we would have created a Greece large enough so that all its children could live freely and happily'.

At the end of February 1919, as Greek forces passed through the Bosphorus on the way to Ukraine, Plastiras, who was making what was apparently his first visit to the Ottoman capital, was once again filled with patriotic fervour at the sight of the Emperor Justinian's great edifice of Hagia Sophia, of which he had dreamed as a child. When he ordered the raising of the Greek flag as the troopship came abreast of Hagia Sophia all those on board wept. When a member of his regiment shouted 'Long live our *Polis*', two and a half thousand *evzones* took up the cry.

Plastiras managed to arrange a short tour of Constantinople. When, at last, he set foot in Hagia Sophia his childhood dream became a reality. He also visited the Ecumenical Patriarchate and set eyes upon the gate from which the Patriarch Grigorios V had been hung by the Turks on the outbreak of the Greek war of independence in 1821.[1] There is no reason to doubt the accuracy of Plastiras' description of the extraordinary degree of patriotic fervour of the soldiers that he commanded. But there were, of course, many Greeks who did not share his messianic nationalism.

Despite the thwarting of Greek ambitions to participate in the occupation of Constantinople in late 1918, Greece's irredentist aspirations received a massive boost when in mid-May 1919 Greek forces, with the blessing of the British, French and American governments, landed in Smyrna, the first stage in the possible annexation by Greece of a considerable part of western Asia Minor. Towards the end of May 1919, the Greek expeditionary force received the order to leave Ukraine and join the Greek forces in Smyrna, an order, so Plastiras wrote, that was greeted 'with frantic enthusiasm and indescribable joy'. When a few days earlier, General Konstantinos Nider, the overall commander of the Greek forces in Ukraine, had announced to the troops under his command that Smyrna was becoming Greek, he and they had wept (Plastiras 1979: 1–54).

It was at this critical time that the fate of the antiquities that had come to light when the allied forces on the Macedonian front had excavated trenches, dugouts and gun emplacements became a matter for discussion at the highest levels of the Greek government. The issue of these antiquities thus became linked to the politics of the Great Idea and the hopes of many Greeks. The antiquities had in effect been 'weaponized'.

Such, indeed, was the abundance of the antiquities unearthed that both the British and French military authorities had recognized the importance of preserving them and museums were improvised, where these accidental finds could be held until the end of hostilities. The British collection was housed initially in the White Tower in Salonika and subsequently in a building in the grounds of the Papafeion Orphanage, where the British military headquarters were also situated. A not negligible number of those who had studied at the British School at Athens (sometimes referred to as the British

School of Archaeology) were posted to the Macedonian front. This ensured that the collection was well cared for while hostilities lasted (Shapland and Stefani 2017).

It was originally intended that the British and French collections of antiquities should form the basis of an archaeological museum in Salonika, as the ephor of antiquities of the city, Efstratios Pelekidis, envisaged. Following the armistice with the defeated Bulgarian forces, however, General Sir George Milne, the commander of the British expeditionary force, probably at the prompting of Major A.G. Wade, an amateur archaeologist and latterly curator of the British Salonika Force Museum, suggested that the contents of the museum be deposited in the newly established Imperial War Museum in London. In the event, the British Museum was considered the appropriate home for a collection of some 3,000 antiquities, most of them modest, shipped in 29 crates.

Although the Director of the British Museum at the time, F.G. Kenyon, hailed the donation as 'a courteous and liberal act of international comity',[2] the donation could perhaps better be described as an exercise in *Realpolitik*. The reason advanced by the Greek government for the decision to agree to the donation was that it had been made in recognition of the respect of the British authorities for the relevant Greek antiquities legislation. In itself, this scarcely seems an adequate reason for waiving the legislation. This stipulated that antiquities found in Greece should remain in the country, unless they were deemed *akhrista* or 'useless'. It is a reasonable assumption that, in part at least, the motive of the Greek government in sanctioning the donation concerned the pressing need for the support of one of the key great powers, Great Britain, whose benevolence would be essential if Greece's grandiose irredentist ambitions were to have any hope of being achieved.

Two weeks *before* the Greek occupation of Smyrna and its hinterland[3] which began on 15 May 1919, Dimitrios Kaklamanos, the Greek minister in London, had called on Earl Curzon of Kedlestone, soon to become foreign secretary, to issue instructions that, in accordance with Greek antiquities legislation, the Salonika Force antiquities should be handed over to the Greek archaeological authorities in Salonika. Was it a mere coincidence that, a little over a month *after* the Greek landing in Smyrna, the foreign minister, Alexandros Diomidis, with the authority of the prime minister, Eleftherios Venizelos, informed the British Legation in Athens that the holdings, with two exceptions, of the Salonika Force Museum would, as had been requested by General Milne, be donated to the British Museum?

In the interim, the serious indiscipline of the Greek troops involved in the 15–16 May landings in Smyrna had led to the Turks suffering over 300 dead and wounded. There were some 100 Greek casualties resulting from the clashes. This was combined with riotous behaviour by elements in the large Greek population of the city. These events dealt an irreparable blow to the notion of a Greek *mission civilisatrice* in Asia Minor. An Interallied Commission of Enquiry which had been commissioned to investigate

the events of 15–16 May was highly critical of Greece and called into question the future of the Greek occupation. The authorization for the Salonika Force antiquities to go to the British Museum may well have been part of an attempt to re-establish the good will hitherto enjoyed by Greece in the eyes of her allies.

Relations between the Welsh prime minister, David Lloyd George, and the Cretan prime minister, Eleftherios Venizelos, had been excellent during the Macedonian campaign. Moreover, in the Foreign Office there were a number of officials who had a considerable degree of sympathy for Greek aspirations. One of these, A.W. Leeper, wrote glowingly to his brother Rex of Venizelos' presentation of the Greek case at the Versailles peace conference: 'we all thought it was the most brilliant thing we've ever heard, such amazing strength and tactfulness combined'. Others in this group included Harold Nicolson and Arnold Toynbee who, with Leeper, had been charged with preparing for the conference. Nicolson, one of the Foreign Office's experts on Greek affairs, had written that 'we will be morally lacking if we allow this sensitive and progressive [Greek] civilisation to be again subordinated to the Turks'. He was subsequently to write that he had 'no sympathy whatsoever' for the Turks (Goldstein 1989: 345, 343). While Toynbee did not favour Greek expansion in Asia Minor, he did briefly contemplate that Turkey might be denied Constantinople. When, at the war's end, Toynbee had been appointed to the Koraes Chair of Modern Greek and Byzantine History, Language and Literature at King's College, London, he soon offended the rich Anglo-Greeks who had funded the chair by writing of atrocities committed by Greek forces in Asia Minor and was forced into what he himself described as an 'involuntary resignation'.[4] The philhellenic sentiments of some in the Foreign Office had been placed under severe strain by the behaviour of elements in the Greek armed forces in Asia Minor.

The donation of the contents of the Salonika Force Museum to the British Museum is the most important of a number of initiatives which were intended to reinforce the political, cultural and educational ties between Britain and Greece at this critical juncture in the country's history when it appeared to many Greeks, among them Colonel Nikolaos Plastiras, that Greece was poised to achieve its long-standing irredentist ambitions. These included the foundation in 1913 of the Anglo-Hellenic League in 1913 (Watkins 2013). The objectives of the League were the defence of the 'just claims and honour of Greece' and the prevention of misunderstandings between 'the British and Hellenic races'. It sought to improve 'the social, educational, commercial and political relations of the two countries'. Greek Legations and the Greek communities of Britain and France engaged in a vigorous propaganda campaign seeking to justify Greece's irredentist claims (Kitsikis 1963). In Britain, wealthy members of the Greek community and the Greek government funded the establishment in 1919 of the Koraes Chair when they were offered by the Principal of King's College and stalwart Venizelist, Ronald Burrows, the prospect of a chair whose occupant 'would

have very little routine work, and would be able to give practically his full time to the general promotion of the cause', this being that of a Venizelist 'Greater Greece'(Clogg 1986: 8). Even the Greek Orthodox Church was enlisted in the effort to shore up Greece's relationship with Britain. In July 1922, as the situation of the Greek forces in Asia Minor became desperate, the Ecumenical Patriarch, Meletios IV, like Venizelos a Cretan, and the Holy Synod ruled that the religious orders, long a contested issue, of the Church of England, then a more influential body than it is today, were as valid as those of the Roman Catholic and Armenian Orthodox Churches.

The Greek occupation of Smyrna and parts of western Asia Minor which had been launched in May 1919 with such enthusiasm and optimism ended in the disastrous defeat of the over-extended Greek expeditionary force by the Turkish nationalists under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk) in August and September of 1922. The age-long dreams of the restoration of past glories so graphically described by Colonel Plastiras were consumed in the burning of Smyrna. The 'weaponization' of antiquities and the other initiatives mentioned had manifestly not achieved the hoped for support of the Great Powers.

Notes

1 Another visitor to Constantinople at this time was King Alexander, the second son of King Constantine I, who had been deposed by Britain and France in 1917 on account of his supposed pro-German views. Alexander had repeatedly sought to sail up the Bosphorus but Venizelos feared that such a visit might cause a negative reaction. Eventually, however, despite the objections of the Allied powers, permission was given for the king to sail for Constantinople in the cruiser Averoff on 21 July 1920 subject to certain conditions: the Averoff was neither to land the king nor to fly the royal ensign as that would have necessitated military salutes by the Turks and by allied warships. Predictably the king was noisily greeted by a large crowd of Greek inhabitants of the city. Three months later Alexander died after having been bitten by a monkey. The king was apparently greatly moved by his visit, an account of which was given by Christos Zalakostas (1952: 158–60). I am grateful to Professor Nikos Alivizatos for this reference.
As recently as 1952, during the second premiership of Plastiras, by then a general and almost 70, Georgios Ventiris, a staunch Venizelist before World War II but, by the 1950s, a senior member of the royal household, offered advice to King Paul on the eve of his state visit to Turkey. In his letter, Ventiris begged Paul not to visit Hagia Sophia:

> it is inconceivable that the son of Constantine [Paul's father], the remote but worthy successor of the Emperor Palaiologue who fell on the walls of Constantinople, should set foot in the Sacred Ark of the Hellenic Nation now that it has become a Turkish museum.
>
> (Hourmouzios 1972: 248)

2 British Museum Central Archive. Trustees' Letter Book.
3 On Greece's disastrous entanglement in Asia Minor, see Llewellyn-Smith (1973). On Greece's claims at the Paris Peace Conference see Petsalis-Diomidis (1978).

4 The ensuing imbroglio which led to Toynbee's departure from King's College is discussed in Clogg (1986); additional material in Clogg (2015).

In parenthesis, it should be mentioned that Professor Nassos Papalexandrou of the University of Texas has been studying more recent instances of the way in which gifts of antiquities, frequently drawn from duplicates held by the National Archaeological Museum, have been used by Greek governments to win the support, or at least the goodwill, of American, European and, on occasion, Soviet bloc politicians in the years after World War II. For instance, towards the end of the 1946–49 civil war, an architectural block of the Temple of Athena Nike on the Acropolis was presented to President Truman as a gesture of thanks by the Greek government for American economic and military assistance during the civil war.

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18 Beyond the Anathema

The Church of Greece as policy agent during World War I

Theodosis Tsironis

In Athens on 12 December 1916, the Church of Greece, at the instigation of the Royalist Reservists' League, pronounced an Anathema against Eleftherios Venizelos, who at the time was head of the revolutionary Provisional Government in Salonika. By this formal Anathema the Church excommunicated Venizelos. The ceremony was presided over by the Metropolitan of Athens, who was the first to cast a stone onto the ground in the *Champs de Mars.* He was followed by a great crowd of royalists, members of the League and civilians. The Metropolitan pronounced the words of the curse: 'Anathema against Eleftherios Venizelos, who has imprisoned senior members of the clergy and plotted against the Kingdom and the Homeland'. At the end of the ceremony, a large pile of stones was to be seen, which remained for months. Venizelos himself, when he returned to Athens in June 1917, insisted that the stones should remain as a reminder to the people that despite the curse, his policies had triumphed. This notorious Anathema was the most spectacular symbol of the National Schism which divided the Greek nation.

The Anathema was a landmark in the relations between the Church of Greece and those in power since it affected them not only temporarily but to an extent that could not be imagined by the institutions concerned. Even today, it continues to 'haunt' public discourse, whenever the Church takes a critical stand and voices its disagreement on issues related to government policy and public life in general. Nevertheless, if the study of the Church's role in the political events unfolding during World War I were to be limited to the Anathema, this would be a distortion of the true nature and dimensions of the event.

With this in mind, in the present chapter I shall not refer further to the Anathema itself, which was indeed politically and symbolically a major moment in Greece's political history, but rather examine some other parameters, in order to highlight, on the one hand, the complexity of the role of the Church as an important, if unexpected, policy agent, and on the other to avoid generalisations and stereotypes and, crucially, the presumed identification of the whole Church with the royalist party. I shall focus on the following issues: (a) the attitude of the Church towards political and party-related rivalry; (b) how the Church's public discourse was redefined

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through its interventions; (c) the Church's aims in its relations with the various Greek governments; (d) its position regarding participation in the country's constitutional bodies and why it was not followed through; and (e) its relations with the representatives of Greece's allies and their Churches.

During the first months of 1916, a few months before the culmination of the National Schism, political tensions seem to have started gradually to affect members of the clergy, who openly expressed their political views, even within the churches. The Holy Synod, which had kept a distance from party-political rivalry up to the summer of 1916, tried to suppress such behaviour, making it clear to the local Bishops that they should discipline their priests. But this 'wait-and-see' approach was put to the test when the National Defence movement exploded onto the scene. More specifically, the Church was put in a difficult position when the Provisional Government was formed in Salonika and two different hubs of state power were created. According to one view, already from early October of that year, an informal group had been put together consisting of politicians, military figures and church officials, headed by the Metropolitan of Larissa, Arsenios. The committee was formed according to the wishes of King Constantine and its purpose was both to collect incriminating data regarding the stand of the revolutionary government and the clerics supporting it against the dissenting royalist priests, and to leak information to the anti-Venizelist press in order to influence its readership.

The political and territorial Schism also took the form of an ecclesiastical Schism, in that ecclesiastical agents sided with either one or the other party. Loyalty and obedience towards the two conflicting state powers was linked to the way in which the royal family was cited during church services. This explains the great interest in this issue of both governments, in Athens and Salonika. Even before the Anathema was pronounced in Athens, four Metropolitans in provinces of Northern Greece, including the Metropolitan of Salonika Gennadios Alexiadis, had stopped citing the names of members of the royal family in the areas under their ecclesiastical jurisdiction. Was this decision however based on the free will of the clergy? According to private correspondence between the Government's Commissioner in Kozani-Florina and Fotios, the Metropolitan of Kozani, it seems that the prohibition of any mention of their name was the result of direct orders issued by the Revolutionary Government of Salonika.[1] Nevertheless, state intervention in the affairs of the church was not limited to how the royal names were or were not cited. In the early months of 1917, at least two Bishops whose seats were located in the revolutionary areas, namely Aimilianos of Grevena and Polykarpos of Trikkis and Stagoi, stated that they were being persecuted by Entente troops and faced irregular if not illegal intervention in the church administration of their provinces by the Government of Salonika (Stragkas 1969: 678).

The recognition of the legitimacy of state power by the ecclesiastical authorities was not only a desirable objective but also an intended and

necessary one, since it would ensure or at least facilitate a law-abiding stand by the public. From March 1917, the pro-royalist Synod in Athens had been receiving information of a pending meeting in Salonika between pro-Venizelist bishops and the bishops of the so-called New Territories.[2] This news led to the immediate mobilisation of the Synod, which addressed the clergy of the so-called New Territories, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ecumenical Patriarchate, seeking to prevent the bishops' participation in the scheduled meeting. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, perceiving the critical nature of this development, sent instructions to the Greek Ambassador in Constantinople to exert pressure on the Patriarchate to condemn the clergy who took part in the Salonika meeting, which was described by the Church of Greece and the Ministry as a 'parasynod' and its members named 'insurrectionists'. The Athens government had every reason to be concerned, since this was not purely an ecclesiastical issue, but primarily a political one. The ecclesiastical meeting of Salonika, and the recognition it was expected to grant the revolutionary regime, severely weakened the political influence and negotiating strength of the 'State of Athens'.

During the same period, at a meeting between Venizelos, as Head of the Provisional Government, and the Metropolitan of Salonika Gennadios, the former expressed his desire to form an autonomous ecclesiastical power in the territories controlled by the government of Salonika, because he feared a strain of anarchy present in the Church. Gennadios refrained from responding and consulted the Provincial Synod of Salonika. Its members expressed the need for a meeting of the Clergy of the New Territories, and submitted a memorandum on the issue to Venizelos.[3] It included extensive references to the political schism between the senior and junior clerics of the New Territories, between the supporters of the Venizelist movement and the 'reactionaries', who had either left of their own accord or been expelled by the Provisional Government.

The meetings were attended throughout by the Advisor for Religious Affairs and Education of the government of Salonika, who also shaped the agenda. The bishops were asked to decide on issues with a political resonance, as well as on those of an ecclesiastical nature. The first one involved the establishment of an administrative body for their Churches, under the name Ecclesiastical Archieratic Council (EAS), that 'would follow the inspiration of the National Government' and whose actions would require the approval and agreement of the latter. Furthermore, decisions had to be taken about all those Metropolitans who did not recognise the government of Salonika and had abandoned it, or been expelled by it, since they were considered a risk to public order. Finally, the bishops were asked to define a new way of referring to the Provisional Government in church and to examine the possibility of modifying existing hymns and blessings addressed to the royal family (Eustratiadis 1917: 137; also Aggelopoulos 1991: 28–9).

The Assembly of Bishops of New Greece, as it was officially named, initially approved the establishment of the EAS, whose members would swear

allegiance to the revolutionary government of Salonika and declare their loyalty to its policies. It was also decided to appoint governors, approved by the government, at the Metropolitan Sees whose bishops were in the State of Athens, or had fallen into disrepute with the Venizelists. After an exchange of views, some of them of a radical liberal and democratic nature, the meeting decided to approve the citing at church services of the names of members of the revolutionary government, of the nation and the army, and quietly to drop the citing of members of the royal family; however, the proposal to omit or modify certain blessings and hymns was not accepted.[4]

The change of government in Athens in June 1917, and the supremacy of the Venizelist party unavoidably affected the power relations between the pro-Venizelist and anti-Venizelist bishops of the Autocephalous Church of Greece. The idea of promoting the Metropolitan of Kitium Meletios Metaxakis, to the metropolitan throne of Athens came from a close associate of Venizelos, Andreas Michalakopoulos. Meletios, an ardent supporter of Venizelos' ecclesiastical policy up to that point, was considered 'an extremely intelligent cleric – almost as intelligent in politics as you yourself […] He will become, under your guidance, the Venizelos of the Greek Church' (Gatopoulos 1947: 90). Regarding the comparison of Meletios to Venizelos, Nikolaos Dimitrakopoulos, a former Minister of Justice who had broken with Venizelos, and Philippos Dragoumis, son of former Prime Minister Stephanos Dragoumis, called him, with a negative connotation in this case, 'Venizelos in a cassock' (Mavropoulos 1960: 172; also Dragoumis 1995: 272). According to Michalakopoulos' plans, Meletios should be put in charge of the ecclesiastical reform and the clergy would not be limited only to their religious duties, but would also enlighten the public on issues of governmental interest and speak 'about savings, […] patriotism, the political duties of their listeners etc' (Gatopoulos 1947: 91). Thus, through his proposals, Michalakopoulos wished for a Church that was fully in line with the governmental and ideological premises of the Liberal party.

During Meletios' brief term in office (1918–20), his designs for the reorganisation of the Church and its relations with the state did not come to fruition, since they were fully dependent on internal political developments, and their implementation presupposed a continuation of Venizelist governance. After all, his own rise to and tenure of the metropolitan throne of Athens was the outcome of political circumstances. During these two years, the policy of ecclesiastical 'cleansing' was completed and bishops were appointed to the Church's administration who were positively disposed towards Venizelos' party. For this reason, no particular tension was observed in the Church's relations with the latter. Only during the final months prior to the elections of November 1920, the Synod held a debate on the most suitable ways for it to make a public intervention. At that point, proposals were put forward which pointed towards an autonomous role for the Church. Such a view of the Church's position was at that time radical and not acceptable to the anti-Venizelist politicians while it was also subsequently

frustrated by external, unforeseeable factors, such as the election results of 1920 and the subsequent reversal in power relations at the top of the ecclesiastical administration.

With regard to the stand of the senior clergy vis-à-vis the allies and foreign states, it is worth noting that the Synod received telegrams at the end of 1916 from Bishops who dramatically outlined the food shortages that occurred as a result of the naval blockade imposed by the Forces of the Entente (Holy Synod 1955: 300–2). Consequently, the Synod decided to seek the mediation of other Churches in order to lift the blockade. Purely political criteria were used to determine the recipients of this appeal since those chosen were the Orthodox Church of Russia, the Anglican Church and the Church of Rome, i.e., those Churches that could intercede with their countries' governments that were either involved in the blockade or had a major political influence. When the power relations shifted, the delivery of these letters became part of the indictment against the members of the Synod, since they were linked to political criteria. In fact, the style and content of the letters differed depending on the recipient; in the case of the Pope and the Anglican Church, an appeal was made to their charitable nature, and more specifically the letters referred to the interest of the papal church for its fellow believers, the citizens of Greece, who were also affected by the blockade. Only in the letter to the Russian church did the Synod include critical political comments on the stand of the Entente Forces and the revolutionary government:

> For the last three weeks, the allied navy has undertaken a close and rigid blockade of the coast and islands, through which the illegal revolutionary movement has artificially and violently isolated from the state the new territories annexed following two victorious wars, by terrorizing them under the rule of a foreign military occupation by a political group, and even attempted to violently recruit soldiers by any means, and exiled and imprisoned Bishops and Priests who had remained loyal.[5]

The contents of the letter were made known in the USA, and the news spread that its recipients included the US President. Its publication in the press of the diaspora caused various reactions among the Greeks living abroad. The only positive reply to the letter came from the Pope, who made representations to the British government, while the Church of Russia restricted itself to a vague assurance that it would take relevant steps. On the other hand, the answer from the Archbishop of Canterbury, head of the Anglican Church, was clearly negative; through the Greek embassy in London, he replied as follows:

> That he has taken this appeal into account with all due respect and attention, but it would be incompatible with his duties to become involved in political matters of an international nature, which concern His Majesty's Government. He therefore regrets that he cannot make any such representation.[6]

The Synod's initiative therefore did not lead to tangible, positive results as regards the lifting of the blockade, because any intervention by the foreign Churches would mean that they were taking a public stand over an issue of international relations.

The attitude of the Church towards the allies of Greece changed with Meletios' election as Archbishop of Athens. The new Metropolitan of Athens showed his political affiliations and officially sided with the foreign policy adopted by the Greek government, as an ally of Great Britain. One of his actions was to send a telegram to the Archbishop of Canterbury expressing his admiration for the military efforts made by Great Britain during the war and even described the latter as being 'holy in character'. In this telegram, Meletios wrote:

> I take this opportunity to note the identity of views of the two Churches regarding the holy values involved in this battle for justice and freedom for people and nations; to proclaim the admiration of the congregation of the Greek Church for the determination of the British soldiers to fight for lasting peace in the world, for which the Holy Churches of God pray in perpetuity to the lord of peace.[7]

Naturally, the way in which this particular initiative of Meletios was handled by the government was influenced by the contents of the telegram. A similar attempt made by the pro-royalist Metropolitan Theoklitos, in December 1916, to approach the same recipient, had been strongly criticised by the Liberals as an intervention in the state's foreign policy and became part of the indictment against him. In the case of Meletios however, the government did not consider that the contents of the telegram went beyond the jurisdiction of the church, although it referred to a foreign policy issue, i.e., the alliance of the two states during the hostilities. The rise of Meletios to the throne also marked the close proximity between the two Churches, which enjoyed the approval of the Greek government. Their cooperation was signed and sealed by the Bishop of London, through his visit to the Metropolis of Athens, in October 1918; a development that resulted from the alliance of the two states within the framework of the Entente.

As to the claims made by the Church for the participation of the clergy in the country's constitutional bodies, it is worth noting that as soon as Venizelos' government was established in Athens, the pro-Venizelist side of the Church displayed a strong urge to participate actively in the political life of the country. Its representatives considered the conditions favourable for them to put forward to the State their demands concerning the institutionalisation of the Church's public presence. Within this framework, and during the Venizelist governance in the years from 1917 to 1920, various proposals on the participation of the clergy in the constitutional bodies of the state were officially discussed for the first time by the administrative bodies of the Church, both in Athens and in Salonika, and submitted to the State.

For example, on 17 June 1917 the Metropolitan of Salonika Gennadios, as Chairman of EAS, recommended the representation of the Church at the Constituent or Revisionist Assembly that was expected to convene in Athens after the victory of the Liberal party. Arguing for his proposal, Gennadios considered the political conjuncture to be of critical importance, since 'the Constituent Assembly usually both subverts and creates policies' and a way needed to be found for the Church to be represented in it.[8] He was concerned about laws being enacted that would negatively affect the institutions of the church and weaken its privileges. He was encouraged in this respect by the Venizelist Minister of Internal Affairs, Emmanouil Repoulis, who stated however that 'the Church should be represented in the Senate or the Council of State but not in Parliament where members are elected, since the prestige of the clergy would be damaged if they were to enter the electoral debate'.[9] However, these views were not submitted for discussion by the government in 1917, since priority was understandably given to the adoption of measures that would 'cleanse' the church's administration.

The policy of 'cleansing' the church administration which began in 1917, was considered essential for two main reasons, which also help explain the attitude of the government towards the Church: (a) it guaranteed to neutralise all bishops whose ideas, by remaining loyal to the exiled king Constantine, hindered the implementation of the government's programme; and (b) it secured posts to be filled by bishops who supported the Liberals, and the government's plans. What was innovative about the 'cleansing' policy as implemented by the Church, compared to the way it was implemented by the state authorities, was the fact that the latter assigned it to the clergy, who had the burden and responsibility of its implementation. In this way, Venizelos' government wanted to give its affiliated bishops a kind of free rein and relative independence over the proceedings, so that it could present the criminal convictions as the work of the Church and not its own. In total, of the 31 bishops, among them the former Metropolitan of Athens and the other four former members of the Holy Synod, that were accused in 1917 of interference in secular affairs – in other words for their involvement in the Anathema – only three were found innocent (Tsironis 2010: 106–19).

World War I affected the Orthodox Church in Greece, mainly because it suffered the effects of the National Schism. There were numerous challenges to be addressed which concerned either its role in the political life of the country, or in assigning a purpose to the global conflict. The political establishment of that period, which governed the relations of the state with the autocephalous Orthodox Church of Greece, is reflected in the words of the then Royal Commissioner to the Holy Synod, one of the main institutional exponents of these relations, while addressing the Bishop of London, during a visit made by the latter to the Metropolis of Athens in October 1918. According to the Royal Commissioner,[10] the modern Christian world is asking for new state organisations and national borders to be regulated, with respect to their sanctity, since they are drawn by God's hand:

> This fact provides the ministers of Christ with the duty and right to raise their voices, so that the Peace Conference receives a mandate to provide peace for all, to abolish the tyranny of the past and to prohibit any new tyranny which violates in the slightest degree the national borders of the peoples.

It is clear that the Royal Commissioner's expectation was that the Church should endorse the national aspirations of Greece. He also voices his conviction that:

> Your overall political, social and national context is such that the voice of the Anglican bishops can be raised with great authority in favour of a totally impartial and complete adoption of the holy rights of nations (…) today the voice of the Church itself is called upon to rise up and support the establishment of a new international regime, that is truly fair, free and Christian.

These words, spoken by the victorious side in the conflict, reflected the religious character assigned to the World War and the expectations raised for the ensuing period. Owing to the distance that separates us from that time, there can be various interpretations of the words; however, they definitely express the contribution that the church was expected to make in shaping post-war political, legal and social conditions.

Notes

1 Stragkas 1969: 672, 674. Also Ιστορικό Αρχείο Ιεράς Συνόδου, Θέματα Συνόδου (hereafter IAIS), 1916, Extracts of the minutes of the 18 Nov. 1916 session of the Holy Synod. On the same matter see also the letter of Eirinaios, Metropole of Kassandreia to Averof, Minister of Education and Religious Affairs of the Salonika government, 1 December 1916, in Κώδικας Αλληλογραφίας Ιεράς Μητροπόλεως Κασσανδρείας, vol. Β (1914–25), p. 494, Museum of Macedonian Struggle, Thessaloniki.

2 During the Ottoman period all Orthodox Greeks of the Ottoman state were under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, but after the establishment of the Greek Kingdom and of the Autocephalous Church of Greece the Greeks of the Kingdom gradually came under the jurisdiction of the latter. In 1928, the administration of the Greeks of the New Territories (which had been added during the Balkan Wars) except Crete and Mount Athos, was assigned to the Church of Greece, while in spiritual matters they remained under the Ecumenical Patriarch (Tsironis 2010).

3 'Υπόμνημα της Επισκοπικής Συνόδου Θεσσαλονίκης προς τον Πρόεδρον της προσωρινής κυβερνήσεως κύριον Ελ. Βενιζέλον περί συγκλήσεως της Ιεραρχίας', Thessaloniki, 28 February 1917. The text was published in the ecclesiastical periodical of the Metropolis of Salonika *Grigorios o Palamas*, vol. 1, pp. 10–17.

4 Ιστορικό Αρχείο Ιεράς Μητροπόλεως Θεσσαλονίκης (hereafter IAIMTh), vol. 69/8, file Γ1λστ΄, Εκκλησιαστικόν Αρχιερατικόν Συμβούλιον, Εγκύκλιος του Εκκλησιαστικού Αρχιερατικού Συμβουλίου (αρ. 10), Thessaloniki, 10 June 1917. Also Eustratiadis 1917: 178–90, where all the discussions are summarised.

The minutes of all the sessions were published at the request of the Salonika Government, indicating their desire for transparency in the execution of ecclesiastical policy.

5 IAIS 1917–19, Επιστολή της Ιεράς Συνόδου στη Διοικητική Σύνοδο της Ρωσικής Εκκλησίας (no. 698), Athens, 19 December 1916.

6 IAIS 1917–19, Επιστολή του Υπουργείου των Εξωτερικών στην Ιερά Σύνοδο (no. 191), Athens, 13 January 1917.

7 IAIS vol. 1.8, Μητροπολίτης Μελέτιος Μεταξάκης, Τηλεγράφημα του Μητροπολίτη Αθηνών προς τον Αρχιεπίσκοπο Κανταβρυγίας (no. 5159), Athens, 27 March 1918.

8 IAIMTh vol. 71/10, Γραμματεία Ιεράς Μητροπόλεως, file Γ3α΄, 'Ακριβές απόσπασμα συνεδρίασης ΕΑΣ, συνεδρίαση της 17ης Ιουνίου 1917'.

9 IAIMTh vol. 71/10, Γραμματεία Ιεράς Μητροπόλεως, file Γ3α΄, 'Ακριβές αντίγραφον εκ του Δ΄ Κώδικος των Πρακτικών του Εκκλ. Αρχ. Συμβουλίου', συνεδρίαση ΣΛΓ΄, (24 June?) 1920. The exact date of the conversation between Gennadios and Repoulis is not mentioned.

10 Gennadeios Library, Ioannis Gennadios Archive, Box 3: Church and State officials, Institutions, Societies, Folder 3.1: Church: correspodence with church officials about various subjects, Προσφώνηση του Βασιλικού Επιτρόπου στην Ιερά Σύνοδο της Εκκλησίας της Ελλάδος Μιχαήλ Ι. Γαλανού προς τον Σεβασμιώτατο Επίσκοπο Λονδίνου Δόκτωρα Ίγκραμ, κατά την επίσκεψή του στην Μητρόπολη Αθηνών, που πραγματοποιήθηκε στις 22 Οκτωβρίου 1918, Athens, 22 October 1918.

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19 The Great War and the coming together of Zionists in Greece, 1914–19

Philip Carabott

Nationalism, often masquerading as unadulterated patriotism, was a fundamental underlying cause of both the outbreak and the outcome of World War I. The Armistice and the dissolution of three multiethnic empires in central, eastern and south-eastern Europe gave rise to a score of enlarged and new successor states, whose raison d'être partly rested on the alleged triumph of the concept of national self-determination. The establishment of a Jewish national state in Eretz Israel would have to wait for another 30 years and came about only after more than six million Jews had been murdered by the Germans and their collaborators across Europe. Yet, World War I did open up new paths for the diffusion of the national idea(l) among European Jewry, and, by extension, the legitimisation of Zionism as a bona fide nationalist movement in the eyes of at least some of the victorious Great Powers. To this effect, the so-called Principal Allied Powers concluded treaties that changed the map of Europe and further afield, imposing punitive terms on the defeated. Crucially, these swayed the successor states to accept certain obligations as regards the civil, political and religious rights of their ethnic/national minorities in the context of what became known as the Minorities Treaties (see Fink 2004: 133–358).

Despite the turbulent and on occasion precarious war-footing of Greece – or perhaps because of it – the Zionist ideal did make inroads in the Jewish community of Salonika, by far the most important such community of New Greece, at the expense of both the Assimilationists of the Alliance Israélite Universelle and the Socialists. After the establishment of the Macedonian Front in autumn 1915, the allure of the pro-German Zionist Nouveau Club (est. 1911) petered out significantly, not least because the British requisitioned its premises. On the initiative of Abraham Samuel Recanati (1888–1980), head of the Zionist youth movement Maccabi, two new Zionist associations came into being in 1916: the Hatehya (Rebirth) and the Association des Jeunes Juives. A year later, Recanati began publishing the French-language fortnightly paper *Pro-Israel*. In the editorial entitled 'Notre programme' (*Pro-Israel* 1, 1 July 1917: 1), we read:

> We are now at a turning point in history. On the ruins of the past that will collapse, a society based on the spirit of Justice and the Law will

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> rise tomorrow. […] New horizons are opening up for the Jewish Nation that ardently aspires to reconstitute its National Home on its ancestral land, Palestine, and attain the largest degree of emancipation for all its members in all the countries of the Diaspora from an individual and a national point of view. […] One of the reasons for bringing out [*Pro-Israel*] was the interest manifested by non-Jewish intellectuals for our ideal of emancipation and their ardent desire to acquaint themselves with the Jewish problem in all its forms.

What one observes here is the unambiguous endorsement and promotion of Zionism as a national and emancipatory movement. *Pro-Israel* informed its readers about the worldwide reception of the Balfour Declaration and the progress of the war in Palestine, and reported on developments in the Zionist movement in Europe, stressing the need for the unity of its various strands. In an international environment that favoured the concerted undertaking of preparatory work for 'the nation and its soil',[1] the coming together of the city's numerous Zionist associations was undertaken by the Commission Mixte des Sociétés Sionistes (est. early 1917),[2] which counted among its aims the 'realisation of a beautiful project', namely the formation of a federation comprising all Zionists groups and societies in Greece.[3] A year later it changed its name to Commission Générale des Sociétés Sionistes,[4] while in September 1918, on the initiative of Chief Rabbi Jacob Meir, the 'Zionist Federation of Salonika' (ZFS) was established with the staunch activists David Matalon and David Florentin as president and vice-president respectively (Molho 1997: 346).

True to its manifesto, *Pro-Israel* repeatedly carried out interviews with Greek, British, French and Italian officials eager to share their views on the 'Jewish problem'. Thus, King Alexander of Greece pronounced himself 'very pleased' with the prospect of Palestine becoming the 'Jewish national home' (*Pro-Israel* 13, 8 February 1918: 1). For his part, the French Consul General in Salonika expressed his utmost sympathy for Zionism, which he described as an 'idealistic and most legitimate movement'. But he maintained that, because the Jews in Greece were treated in a very liberal manner, most would not choose to move to Palestine when the time came; and he concluded: 'If the Jews of New Greece have not yet had the time to experience all the benefits [arising] from Greek liberalism, the salutary effects of [such treatment] are already being felt by their brothers of Old Greece' (*Pro-Israel* 12, 25 January 1918: 6).

The narrative of Athens' liberal treatment of its Jewish element, particularly by the Venizelists, was a stable of the post-1912 pertinent Greek official discourse, with its roots stretching back to the late 19th-century. Thus, speaking in Parliament in March 1918, the Minister of Foreign Affairs Nikolaos Politis, while reiterating the Venizelists' undertaking to support 'the national work of the Jews in full agreement with the Great Allies of Greece', first communicated in April 1917 (*Pro-Israel* 1, 1 July 1917: 3), held that the country's 'Jewish race' had always lived under the 'mace of freedom and equity'.[5]

Salonikan Zionists begged to differ. Despite the well-publicised expressions of Venizelist support for the Jewish national ideal, in the immediate aftermath of the Great Fire of August 1917, *Pro-Israel* addressed an open letter to Prime Minister Venizelos. Heavily censored, it briefly recorded the case of the secretary of Maccabi, Isac Alvo, who had been court-martialled and sentenced to six months in prison for expressing critical views on the expropriation of whole neighbourhoods that had been razed to the ground by the Great Fire. Is it not the case, the letter stated rhetorically, that in this instance key constitutional provisions had been flagrantly violated (*Pro-Israel* 5, 15 October 1917: 5–6)? A couple of weeks later, in a letter to the daily *Makedonia* (16/29 October 1917), the co-editor of *El Pueblo* noted with alacrity the appearance of a number of anti-Zionist diatribes in the city's Venizelist Press that had led to a few 'ugly' incidents in the streets. Stopping short of calling them partners-in-crime with the country's enemies, the authors of these tirades questioned the Jews' loyalty to the *patrida*, portraying Salonikan Zionism as pro-German and as a movement with unambiguous political aims. Working for a Jewish national state in Palestine, Elie Veissi noted poignantly, did not mean that the Zionists either did not wish to be or were not 'law-abiding citizens who respected the laws of the *Patrida* (homeland)'.

The Zionist predilection to look at these and similar incidents as proof of the Venizelists' anti-Jewish stance is somewhat inconsequential; with martial law in force, any critique that the authorities deemed 'dangerous' and 'subversive' was bound to bring about the appropriate crack down. What matters here is the fact that they felt strong and confident enough to continue to speak on behalf of Salonikan Jewry as a whole. In the words of Benbassa and Rodrigue (2000: 138), 'the real function of Zionism in Salonika was its resistance to Greek hegemony'; in this instance, Venizelist hegemony. Or, as Rena Molho (2005: 182) has put it, the Zionists 'were the only ones who were prepared to stand up to the authorities'.

In this respect, for Salonikan activists seeking to promote the cause of Zionism as a national movement little did it matter that the Balfour Declaration did not constitute 'a profession of genuine support for [its aims]', but was aimed mainly at winning the 'allegiance of world Jewry to the Allied cause, especially in the United States' (Renton 2010: 15, 17). Seemingly, political opportunism was not the prerogative solely of the belligerents. With General Allenby and his troops just 30 km away from the Holy City of Jerusalem, *Pro-Israel* carried a leader with the indicative title 'Vers notre libération' in the wake of the Balfour Declaration. At the same time, Salonika's numerous Zionist societies hastened to pass a resolution in which they expressed their profound gratitude to the 'English Nation' for recognising 'from the start the legitimacy of Jewish aspirations' (*Pro-Israel* 7, 15 November 1917: 1; & 8, 30 November 1917: 3).

Some eight months later, the Zionist association Amele Sion of Ioannina, which included among its founding members the young poet Joseph Eliyia

and the merchant Sabetay Cabili, passed its own resolution on the Balfour Declaration and Jewish emancipation. London's expressed intention to do its utmost to secure a just and permanent settlement of the Romanian Jewish question, it was argued, was but further proof of that great country's traditional and sincere friendship for the Jewish people. 'We confidently look forward to the triumph of the Allied cause as a guarantee for the security and freedom of the persecuted of every race',[6] it concluded optimistically.

Nine days before Armistice Day, the festivities for the first anniversary of the Balfour Declaration took place. Organised by the newly founded ZFS, the ceremonies made Salonika resemble a 'city in celebration'. A huge crowd of some 50,000 jubilant Jews (the figure is of course somewhat inflated), and numerous Greek and Allied dignitaries, assembled in front of the White Tower to listen to the speeches of MPs Moses Cofinas and David Matalon – both elected on the anti-Venizelist ticket in 1915 – in which they expressed, once more, their infinite gratitude to the Entente and Greece (*Pro-Israel* 32, 1 November 1918: 5; & 33, 18 November 1918: 4). Even *Makedonia* (3454, 21 October/4 November 1918: 1), otherwise unsympathetic to all things Jewish, reported favourably on the gathering in a front-page piece entitled 'The Jewish State'.[7]

In the aftermath of Armistice Day, the Salonikan activists' employment of Zionism as a means to an end continued unabated. In his capacity as representative of the city's Zionists at the Zionist Conference held in London in February 1919, the vice-president of the ZFS on numerous occasions caused a stir, at least as far as the ruling Venizelists were concerned. Thus, Florentin was alleged to have maintained in an interview to the *Corriere di Napoli* that Salonikan Jews were exasperated with the government, which, on the pretext of the reconstruction of the city following the Great Fire, had embarked on the dejewification of the *Madre d'Israel*. In response, he proposed that in the forthcoming peace conference the Allies should seriously consider turning Salonika into a 'free city' (Kitsikis 1963: 424) – a repeat, in other words, of the proposal put forward by quite a few Salonikan Jews in the early days of Greek rule. In the same vein, in a letter to the co-head of the political department of the Zionist Bureau in London (soon to become the Central Zionist Office) Chaim Weizmann, the former chief-editor of *La Epoca* spoke of the numerous dangers that the Sephardim were facing in Macedonia, singling out the 'fanaticism' of the Greeks and their 'jealousy of all things Jewish'.[8]

Meanwhile, back in Salonika the Zionist president of the community Jacob Kazes and Chief Rabbi Jacob Meir were frantically making arrangements for holding a congress of the country's Jews. Moves for such a gathering had begun as far back as April 1917, i.e., before the Balfour Declaration, with the formation of a *groupe organisateur* that would undertake all the necessary groundwork. Headed by Meir, an ardent Zionist who would go on to become Chief Rabbi of Palestine in 1921, the group held a number of open preparatory meetings designed to disseminate the ideals of Jewish civil

and political emancipation, the recognition of Jewish national rights (*droits nationaux*) and the development in all its forms of a *centre juif* in Palestine.[9] It also addressed in print form a *manifeste à la population juive*, asking for a 'legitimate solution of the Jewish Question', and noting that Venizelos' provisional government had expressed its 'profound sympathy' for the whole enterprise.[10] The congress was scheduled to take place in August 1917 but was postponed because of the Great Fire.[11]

A somewhat cryptic, albeit explicit, remark in *Pro-Israel* (41, 7 March 1919: 5) on the eve of the 1919 congress (the 'jesting and intrigues surrounding [it] have come to an end'), underlines that the enterprise was fraught with difficulties. As indeed does the accusation expressed by Florentin, that Chief Rabbi Meir tended to act in an autocratic manner.[12] Either way, contrary to conventional wisdom, the congress of 10 March 1919 did not constitute a Zionist gathering *per se* (this would take place in June 1919, also in Salonika), but a congress of representatives from most Jewish communities of Greece under the aegis of the ZFS (*Pro-Israel* 42, 21 March 1919: 7). Its declared aim was to 'present to the Peace Congress the demands of the Jews of Salonika and the Jewish communities of Greece' (*Pro-Israel* 41, 7 Mar. 1919: 5). The resolution it issued reads thus:[13]

The Congress of the Jews of Greece asks of the Peace Conference

I That civil, political and religious equality be assured for all Jews in the constitutional charters of the various countries [they reside in] and by international guarantees.
II That the internal national autonomy of those Jewish groupings who request it be recognised.
III That the Conference provides the political and economic conditions necessary for the reconstitution, under the tutelage of the League of Nations, of the Jewish State in Palestine within its historical limits.
IV That the Jewish people participate in the League of Nations in the same way as other unitary nations.

The coming together of Zionists in Greece was realised in the course of a two-day conference under the auspices of the ZFS on 10 and 11 June 1919. It was held against the background of yet more claims of the alleged anti-Greek stance of key figures of the federation, who were arrested by the Greek authorities on charges of harbouring on its premises – a 'centre of espionage', according to the Athenian Press– a number of Bulgarian Jewish prisoners of war who were waiting to be repatriated.[14] It was attended by delegates of Zionist societies from Larissa, Kavalla, Preveza, Athens and Volos. After expressing their deep indignation at the recent bloody pogroms in Poland, Galicia and the Ukraine, delegates switched their attention to the great task of national restoration on a theoretical level, and to the ways and means by which their brethren could assist and strengthen in practical terms the preparatory work that was actively pursued in Palestine and the

Jewish Diaspora. In order to make more effective the national work of what in actual fact were associations that hitherto had loose ties with each other, it was decided to establish the Zionist Federation of Greece (ZFG) with its base in Salonika. Its aim was to coordinate Zionist activities across Old and New Greece and become the voice of the 'movement' in international fora, Zionist and non-Zionist.[15] As elsewhere among Diaspora Jews, by the mid-1920s, the city's Zionists would split, *inter alia* as a result of diverse readings of the British Mandate. Yet, in view of the fact that most key figures of the ZFG in the early post-Shoah era were former Salonikan Jews, their dominance of the ZFG would continue until the creation of the state of Israel.

Taken together, the holding of the Jewish Congress in March and of the Zionist conference in June should be considered a watershed. Some six years after Salonika's incorporation into the Greek state, both gatherings unmistakably confirmed the primacy of the city's Jews in all matters concerning the country's Jewish element in New and Old Greece alike. On the morrow of the ZFG's establishment, *Pro-Israel* (48, 27 June 1919: 1) carried a leader entitled 'Nous sommes une minorité nationale. Les droits des Juifs en Grèce'. Noting that Greece was not yet included among the states that had recognised the existence of national minorities in its midst, it argued that the city's Jewish community, with its more than 400 years of history, its 70,000 souls, its social, cultural and educational institutions and its unique language unquestionably constituted a national minority. A year later, eager to see its status as a national minority enshrined in a law that would recognise and safeguard the ethnic, religious and cultural rights of the country's Jewish element (*Pro-Israel* 69, 4 June 1920: 8), the Zionist-dominated community council submitted to the government a memorandum entitled 'Les droits de minorité des Juifs de Grèce' (*Pro-Israel* 70, 18 June 1920: 2–3). With a number of important modifications, which ran contrary to the Salonikan Jews' rights and claims, the memorandum formed the basis of Law 2456/1920 on 'Jewish Communities'. But this is another story.

Notes

1 Central Zionist Archives (CZA), Jerusalem, file Z4/42334: Zionist Bureau in London to Commission Générale des Sociétés Sionistes (16 April 1918).
2 CZA L6/419: Zionist Bureau in Copenhagen to Commission Mixte des Sociétés Sionistes (9 August 1917).
3 CZA L6/419: Commission Mixte des Sociétés Sionistes to Zionist Bureau in Copenhagen (6 August 1917).
4 CZA Z4/42334: Commission Générale des Sociétés Sionistes to Zionist Bureau in London (4 March 1918).
5 PSV 1918: 3 (28 February/13 March).
6 CZA Z4/42334 (July 1918).
7 Similar celebrations, held by Zionist associations, took place in Volos, Ioannina and Trikala.
8 CZA Z4/42177: Sam Levy, 'Les Sefaradim en danger' (February 1919).

9 CZA L6/419: Groupe Organisateur du Congrès Juif de Salonique to Zionist Bureau in Copenhagen (12 April & 11 June 1917). Also see Congrès (1917a, 1917b).
10 CZA L6/419: 'Manifeste à la population Juive' (6 April 1917); see also Greek translation of piece in *Patris* (9/22 April 1917).
11 CZA L6/419: Zionist Bureau in Copenhagen to Groupe Organisateur du Congrès Juif de Salonique (4 September 1917).
12 CZA Z4/42177.
13 *Pro-Israel* 42, 21 March 1919: 7; cf. CZA KKL1/49: Syllogue Sioniste Poale Sion to London Zionist Bureau (Volos, 25 May 1919).
14 CZA Z4/42177: Zionist Federation of Salonica (Joseph Usiel) to London Zionist Bureau (26 May 1919).
15 CZA Z4/42177: Zionist Federation of Greece to London Zionist Bureau (31 July 1919); *Pro-Israel*, no. 48 (27 June 1919): 4.

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Part IV

The end and the aftermath

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20 The breakthrough on the Salonika front and the German armistice, 1918

Hew Strachan

On 21 December 1918, the Commander-in-Chief of the British Expeditionary Force in France, Douglas Haig, signed a despatch called 'The advance to victory'. It set out his interpretation of the reasons for which Germany had signed an armistice on 11 November.

> The effect of [the battle of Amiens on 8 August 1918], following so closely after the Allied victory on the Marne, upon the moral both of the German and British troops was very great. Buoyed up by the hope of immediate and decisive victory, to be followed by an early and favourable peace, constantly assured that the Allied reserves were exhausted, the German soldiery suddenly found themselves attacked on two fronts and thrown back with heavy losses from large and important portions of their earlier gains. The reaction was inevitable and of a deep and lasting character.
>
> (Boraston 1919, vol. 1: 263)

The clinching evidence for Haig's claim, cited by the editor of the published version of the general's despatches, came from the other side of the line. The memoirs of Erich Ludendorff, Germany's First Quartermaster General, dubbed 8 August 1918 'the black day of the German army'. As Ludendorff (1919, vol. 2: 679, 683) went on to explain

> We had to resign ourselves now to the prospect of a continuation of the enemy's offensive. Their success had been too easily gained. Their wireless was jubilant, and announced – and with truth – that the *moral* of the German Army was no longer what it had been. The enemy had also captured many documents of inestimable value to them. The Entente must have gained a clear idea of our difficulty in finding reserves, a further reason why they should pursue the offensive without respite.

Amiens did not stand alone but was part of an overall design for a succession of battles whose effects were cumulative, not individual, and whose operational intent was to free and secure the lines of communication which

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would sustain the allied advance. After the allied counter-attack on the Marne on 18 July, the German supreme command (Oberste Heeresleitung or OHL) and the German nation as a whole were prompted to rethink their long-term prospects (Oberkommando des Heeres 1944: 516). On 24 July Ferdinand Foch, the allied generalissimo, convened a meeting of the commanders of the American, British and French armies on the western front. The moment had come, he told them, to go over to the attack after four months of desperate defence. His plan was predicated on successive offensives along the whole length of the western front, of which Amiens became the first (Notin 2008: 392–7; Greenhalgh 2011: 400–9). The western front now more than ever deserved to be called the centre of gravity in the war. It was the theatre nearest not only to Britain but also to the United States. Neither country could deploy, supply and maintain a mass army in a continental war anywhere else, and – although the British army had passed its peak strength in 1917 – that of the United States was waxing stronger by the day. By summer 1919, four million American soldiers would be in France and Foch knew that then the Entente would win the war. He was wrong: the war ended sooner than he or his political masters expected (McCrae 2019).

Although Ludendorff presented the battle of Amiens in his memoirs as a reason to think about a negotiated end to the war, at the time his messages were more mixed. His immediate and characteristic response to the allied success on 8 August was indeed despondent, and the Kaiser followed suit (Diary of Hans Georg von Plessen, cited in Afflerbach 2005: 928; for Ludendorff's version, see Oberkommando des Heeres 1944: 568). Then Paul von Hindenburg, the chief of the general staff, recovered his poise, and Ludendorff with him. Like other officers of OHL, Ludendorff now planned a protracted defence, but, unlike some of them, he would not accept the argument that the front, which had been extended by the gains of March to July 1918, should be shortened. In Berlin, successive foreign ministers had begun to talk about the need for a negotiated end to the war. After 8 August the generals briefly became more open to the idea, but by 13 August, when a crown council was convened at Spa, they had backed down, concluding that the need for peace was not immediate.

One reason why Hindenburg and Ludendorff could prevaricate was because, however central the war in the west had become, they had responsibilities that embraced other theatres. OHL was also in charge of German troops in the east, in the Balkans and on the Ottoman fronts. Moreover, the Prussian general staff acted as the planning body for the Central Powers as a whole, a situation formalised in 1916 by the creation of the Oberstkriegsleitung (OKL). The arrangement provided for the German Kaiser to be the allied commander-in-chief, and the chief of the Prussian general staff the allied chief of staff (Cramon 1920: 66–73). In many respects, the OKL remained a dead letter, but when the Austro-Hungarian chief of staff, Arz von Straussenburg, accompanied the Habsburg emperor, Karl, to Spa for what in German eyes was the second day of the crown council,

on 14 August 1918, Arz thought he was attending a meeting of the OKL. The session began with a *tour d'horizon* of all the theatres of war, touching on Japan, Siberia, Ukraine, Romania, Armenia, Albania and Italy. It only reached France after it had appraised the situation elsewhere. By gaining distance from Amiens, the generals put things in a broader perspective and could reassure themselves that their territorial gains, which were extensive after the treaties of Brest-Litovsk and Bucharest, could both ease their economic needs and provide a geographical buffer. In the next stage of the meeting, Arz raised the question of the war's continuation and stressed the need to come to terms with the enemy. He thought it was no longer possible to win a victory that would enable the Central Powers to dictate a peace settlement (as they had at Brest-Litovsk and Bucharest), and warned the Germans that Austria-Hungary could not fight beyond December. Hindenburg and Ludendorff acknowledged the argument but rejected its logical outcome. They now said it was not yet time to negotiate; first they had to improve the situation by fortifying and stabilising the German front in France (Straussenburg 1924: 281–5; Regele 1968: 152–3; Stevenson 2011: 124–5). Hindenburg's conclusion at the end of 14 August was that, in spite of the defeat at Amiens, the situation could be considered 'full of promise and satisfactory' (Diary of Plessen, 14 August 1918, in Afflerbach 2005: 929).

The line from Amiens to the German armistice was therefore not a straight one, and it passed through fronts other than that in the west. What changed Ludendorff's position once more, at least as he presented it in 1919 from his exile in Sweden, was Bulgaria's decision to capitulate on 29 September.[1] At a stroke the Central Powers lost the equivalent of 30 divisions and the right or eastern flank of their Balkan position was unhinged. The liberation of Serbia looked imminent. Less than two weeks after the Entente commander-in-chief in the Balkans, Franchet d'Esperey, had launched his offensive on the Macedonian Front on 15 September, he had achieved a breakthrough. On the morning following Bulgaria's request for an armistice, 30 September, Ludendorff told the officers of OHL that 'It is to be feared that the Entente will send troops from Macedonia to Constantinople in Turkey's rear… The frontiers of Austria, and therefore our south-eastern front, are threatened'. He concluded by telling his audience that he and Hindenburg were agreed that 'in the interests of the army … it is necessary hostilities should end'.[2]

In his memoirs, Ludendorff became even more expansive on the dangers Germany confronted on 30 September. Now the threat extended from south-east Europe to its heart. 'There were no illusions about the seriousness of the situation created by the collapse of Bulgaria', he wrote. 'It was vital to do everything to secure our position in the Balkan peninsula, in order to prevent the Entente moving into Hungary and making a flank attack on Germany and Austria' (Ludendorff 1919, vol. 2: 715–6). Hindenburg's assessment, as he also portrayed it in his memoirs, echoed that of the First Quartermaster General. For him too Bulgaria was the trigger. One of the

Austro-Hungarian divisions on the way to shore up the Balkan front was made up of Czechs, 'who would presumably refuse to fight'. He went on,

> Although the Syrian theatre lay far from a decisive point of the war, the defeat there would undoubtedly cause the collapse of our loyal Turkish comrades, who now saw themselves threatened in Europe again. What would Rumania, or the mighty fragments of Russia do? All these thoughts swept over me and forced me to decide to seek an end.
>
> (Hindenburg 1920: 411, 428)

Such expansive views of the strategic consequences of Bulgaria's unconditional exit from the war were replicated on the other side of the line by the commander who had precipitated this crisis. By mid-October, Franchet d'Esperey reckoned he had an allied army of 670,000, made up of British, French, Greeks, Italians and Serbs, to face an Austro-German force of 10,000 (Larcher 1929: 241). Exactly four years before, in October 1914, he had urged on the president of the republic, Raymond Poincaré, the opportunities presented by the Balkan front. As the western front hardened, it was possible – he suggested – to take the Central Powers in the rear by supporting the Serbs (Poincaré 1926–33, vol. 5: 360). In the second half of September 1918, he sensed that he had now been given the chance to put that thought into effect. As the commander-in-chief of France's Armée d'Orient as well as a coalition commander, he saw the second-order consequences that could flow from his victory in Macedonia. His immediate targets were Belgrade and the river Danube. He proposed that his advance be supported on its left flank by the 17 Italian divisions in Albania and on its right by the re-entry of Romania to the war. The seizure of Belgrade would give him control of the lower Danube, so cutting the main arterial route linking Germany and Austria-Hungary to the Ottoman empire. The Central Powers would therefore lose a second ally. After that, he would push into Austria-Hungary and Germany. On 28 October Czechoslovakia declared its independence; on the following day the Croats triggered the process which would link the south Slavs of the Habsburg empire to the future Yugoslavia; and on 30 October Hungary broke away from the empire and moved towards an armistice. As southern central Europe imploded, its lands became in Franchet d'Esperey's eyes a free field for manoeuvre across which his armies could advance unimpeded. 'Pour la première fois depuis 1809, une armée française marche sur Vienne!' he wrote in early November. A decade later, in 1929, he described himself as on the road not just to Vienna but to Prague, Dresden and Berlin (Larcher 1929: 9, 253).

Bulgaria was an inflection point in the war precisely because the commanders on each side, Ludendorff and Franchet d'Esperey, mirrored each other in their assessments of the strategic possibilities which followed. Both were driven by their continuing belief that a decisive battle, whose pursuit had proved so fruitless thus far during the First World War, was possible.

Franchet d'Esperey was exploiting one breakthrough, and Ludendorff feared another. By 1 October 1918, the latter was demanding an immediate surrender with so much urgency because he feared that what would follow the collapse in Macedonia would be a decisive battle on the western front in which Germany would be defeated: in the Ludendorff world of stark alternatives, that would be an even bigger catastrophe than a negotiated peace (Afflerbach 2018: 472).

However, others' visions were more measured, and both Franchet d'Esperey and Ludendorff found themselves at odds with more realistic counsels emanating from their own sides. Decisions on this sort of geopolitical scale had been promised too often before by over-optimistic generals, and their political masters had learnt not to take such promises too seriously. Moreover, on both sides, a general presumption prevailed that the war would not end until 1919. That was when the American Expeditionary Force would be ready. The corollary for the Central Powers was that, if they had not won the war by 1919, that was when they would need to negotiate.

The response to Ludendorff's assessment as presented to OHL on 30 September was therefore a mixture of astonishment and denial. Although the Entente had breached the Hindenburg Line (or Siegfriedstellung) in the last week of September, the army was intact in the field and fighting. One of Ludendorff's staff officers wrote in his diary on 28 September of the situation in the west: 'Deep but partial break-ins; on the whole the front still holds. I believe we are still parrying the assault this time'.[3] Austria-Hungary was more worried about its Italian front than the Balkans. Its army's chief of staff, Arz von Straussenburg, who had wanted peace after Amiens, responded to Bulgaria's surrender by suggesting that the empire should seek terms with Serbia and Montenegro, ratify the treaty of Bucharest with Romania, settle the south Slav question and evacuate Albania (Larcher 1929: 246). These were desperate and almost certainly undeliverable steps, but they were less an admission of defeat than an effort to shore up the Balkan front. He proposed to hold on to the shortest line between the Adriatic and the Danube (Rauchensteiner 2013: 1026). In Germany, the chancellor, Max von Baden, reacted angrily to Ludendorff's demand for an immediate armistice. When he assumed office on 1 October, he told the First Quartermaster General that his policy – which was to get a peace – required a more protracted defence, and that a request for an armistice would make a peace initiative impossible (Baden 1968: 324). This was effectively what Ludendorff himself had favoured at Spa on 14 August.

If Max von Baden had been privy to the Entente's thinking, he might have been even more robust in his response to Hindenburg and Ludendorff. As early as 21 September 1918, Franchet d'Esperey's orders warned him that the developing situation on the western front was likely to affect the support that could be sent to Salonika. He should 'base his plan of action on essential considerations and anticipate conditions in which he will be able to limit his offensive and stabilise his new front' (Deygas 1932: 260).

Franchet d'Esperey did not listen. As the pace of his advance picked up, he demanded railway troops, trains and trucks to supply and maintain it. They never came, not least because they were needed in France, but also because, even if they had been sent, they would have arrived too late for use that year. Between 1 September and 11 November 1918, the Armée d'Orient's holdings of horses, mules and trucks remained constant while its zone of operations expanded and its line of communications lengthened (du Clos 1934: 364, 518). The caution in France about his victory continued to belie the scale of Franchet d'Esperey's ambition. On 7 October Paris, responding to an allied conference in the city to address the consequences of the Bulgarian surrender for the further prosecution of the war, told him to form a defensive front from Albania to the Danube and thence to the Black Sea. Franchet d'Esperey's priorities were to be limited (at least by his own standards): the liberation of Serbia, the reengagement of Romania in the war, the opening of links with southern Russia and a possible reconstruction of the Russian front, the isolation of Turkey by land and sea, and the possession of the Dardanelles (Larcher 1929: 244–5; du Clos 1934: 415–6). The Salonika campaign would end at Belgrade, Bucharest and Constantinople, not in Vienna, Dresden and Berlin.

Both Ludendorff and Franchet d'Esperey exaggerated the scale of what was on offer in October 1918. Their big hands were suggesting sweeping movements across small maps. The fantasy of strategic manoeuvre rewarded by a decisive battle had re-emerged from the stalemate of the trenches with extraordinary rapidity. In 1932 Franchet d'Esperey would cite the campaign as evidence that a great victory was as possible in the 20th century as it had been in the 19th. He denounced the methodical approach to warfare characterised by the western front in favour of imagination, large-scale manoeuvre and the search for open space: all these opportunities were available in the east (Franchet d'Esperey preface to Deygas 1932: 9–11).

Like Napoleon, from whom so much of this sort of thinking was derived, Franchet was cavalier about logistics and supply. It was simultaneously less of an issue in the static conditions of the western front, and more of a necessity for a mass army dependent on the production of an industrial society. As the Austro-German forces fell back to the Danube, they destroyed the bridges, tunnels and railway tracks they left behind. The further the allies advanced, the more they relied on local supply in an area already pillaged by the forces of the Central Powers (Deygas 1932: 268; see also Fassy 2003: 420–1). The challenges of feeding and re-arming an army of more than half a million men were exacerbated as the weather deteriorated. From 5 October, rains turned the roads to mud. The winter was beginning, and yet the soldiers had set off in summer uniforms. There was no fodder for the horses and mules, and soon the grass would stop growing. Malaria had been the most common complaint on the Salonika front, but now it was replaced by influenza. It took two entire French divisions, the 57th and the 156th, out of the battle. Between the beginning of October and 11 November 1918, the

French suffered only 264 battle casualties (killed, missing and wounded) from an army whose strength averaged 200,000 at the beginning of September, but on 16 October, 24,443 were hospitalised by disease in a force whose strength had now fallen below 190,000 (Deygas 1932: 269; du Clos 1934: 365, 516, 528, 530). The further and faster Franchet advanced the worse the situation would become. The Greek army on his right lacked transport and the railway line through Thrace to the straits had been destroyed. To the north the internal transport networks of Germany and Austria-Hungary had seized up, as a result of inadequate maintenance and over-extension, and in any case there was no fuel.

Nor was it only supply which was draining the force of the allied advance. The suddenness of the allied victory had left the Supreme War Council unprepared for peace. The efforts of the permanent military representatives had been focused on winning the war; they had not yet addressed with sufficient care the passage from war to peace. When in October Foch suggested that the armistice negotiations with Germany should coordinate the cessation of fighting with the conditions for peace, he had been reprimanded by the French premier, Georges Clemenceau, for stepping outside his professional area of competence. This rigid demarcation of the respective areas of civil and military authority, and their sequencing, made even less sense in the Balkans than on the western front. From the outset the belligerents on both sides had defined their war aims in terms of fresh frontiers, a process promoted by the competition for allies in the region. The collapse of three powers with stakes in the Balkans – Bulgaria, Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire – opened out opportunities for annexation by those states which had opted for the winning alliance, Italy, Romania and Greece, as well as awakening the aspirations of ethnic and national groupings liberated from Habsburg or Ottoman rule. Except for Serbia, the Balkan states had entered the war after it had begun on the basis of a negotiated package of regional war aims, which they now expected to be delivered. Their wars were essentially local, not pan-European, let alone global. Their armies would not join Franchet d'Esperey in his advance on Berlin while they still had to consolidate their anticipated gains closer to home.

From the off, the Italians had not moved from Albania on 15 September, despite Franchet's hope that they would guard his left flank. They wanted to secure Dalmatia before the Serbs did, and at the end of October established their own independent Balkan command. Once the Italians occupied Albania, they effectively halted, getting ready to defend what they had gained (Le Moal 2006: 257–61). On the right, the Greeks stopped when they reached Thrace. Like the British, their eyes were swivelling towards Turkey. Hindenburg and Ludendorff were right to fear both the effect of Bulgaria's collapse on the Ottoman empire and the opportunities which it would present the British in the eastern Mediterranean. The Turkish Grand Vizier, Talaat Pasha, had visited Austria-Hungry and Germany in September, and his return journey took him through the Balkans. What he saw convinced

him that peace – jointly if possible, but separately if need be – was now essential (Dyer 1972a: 149, 160–1; Kieser 2018: 372–9).

In London, it was the implications for the Ottoman empire of the Bulgarian armistice that triggered the British equivalent of the 'big hand, small map' ambitions which so fired Franchet d'Esperey. The British Chief of the Imperial General Staff, Sir Henry Wilson, responded to the news from the Balkans by putting 'in a strong plea for making love to Turkey, not Bulgaria' (Callwell 1927, vol 2: 127). In a memorandum written for the war cabinet on 21 October, Wilson imagined that an armistice with Turkey would free enough troops for Britain to

> be in a position to reinforce our movement on the Danube and in Roumania by an Army of 24 to 32 Cavalry and Infantry Divisions; and in addition we shall be helped by the people of Poland, Bohemia, Bosnia, Herzegovina and Roumania. This is a formidable addition to our present threat to Austria-Hungary along the line of the Danube. It is quite certain that Austria-Hungary is quite unable to withstand such an attack at the same time as pressure, in no way diminished, is exercised by the Italians both in Venetia and in Albania, and it is equally certain that the Germans are in no position to send assistance to their ally.
>
> (Dyer 1972b: 322)

Wilson summed up his memorandum of 21 October in terms which replicated Ludendorff's worst fears: 'In short, if we can get Turkey out of the war in the near future, I see no reason why we should not inflict a final crushing defeat on German Armies on German soil' (Dyer 1972b: 323).

As the allied forces broke through on the Macedonian Front, Franchet d'Esperey wanted the four British divisions under Sir George Milne to form the right flank of his push north to Belgrade, Vienna and Berlin. The British did not agree. Henry Wilson argued that Romania would only re-enter the war if the Black Sea itself were under Entente control (Callwell 1927, vol. 2: 132). In the event, the Supreme War Council at its Paris meeting shelved the more grandiose aspects of Wilson's plan in the interests of allied cohesion. Milne's British divisions were cut from four to three, and he was instead given one French and three Greek divisions (the 1st Greek corps), as well as some Italians and Serbs. On 10 October Franchet d'Esperey ordered Milne to march eastwards through Thrace, with the task of advancing on Constantinople from the landward side. In Palestine Allenby had secured a major victory over the Turks on 19 September at Megiddo, but, like Franchet in the Balkans, he could not hope to exploit his victory before 1919. Milne's divisions could bring force to bear more quickly, and in so doing the British too put the weight on the war's political fruits before they had completed the military defeat of the enemy. They excluded their allies from the armistice negotiations signed with the Turks at Mudros on 30 October.

The allied advance was losing its coherence and pursuing divergent objectives. When Austrian delegates arrived at Villa Giusti on the night of 30

October to begin armistice negotiations with the Italians, Franchet proposed sending his army to support the Italians so that they could launch a joint attack into southern Germany. If his idea had been adopted, his lines of communications would have become even more chaotic. He would have switched his army's direction of march to the north-west from the north-east. The latter rested on the hope that Romania would renounce the treaty of Bucharest imposed on it by the Central Powers in May and so swell the allied armies. It was fulfilled too slowly to have any effect. Franchet d'Esperey stressed the need for audacity and speed, but only after French troops had crossed the Danube on the night of 8/9 November did Romania re-join the Entente. Its former French military adviser, Henri Berthelot, had been tasked with the command of an Army of the Danube, based on a nucleus of French formations, and thought Romania might mobilise six divisions in a week; it did not (Torrey 1999: 349–54; Grandhomme 2011: 60–71). On 7 October, the French ministry of war had instructed Franchet d'Esperey to hold his French and British troops in reserve, and use the Serb, Greek and in due course Romanian and even Bulgarian armies for offensive operations; he was to make good his losses by enlisting Balkan peoples and former Habsburg soldiers from ethnic groups aspiring to independence (Tournyol du Clos 1934: 416). Such arrangements would not generate a cohesive force designed to carry an advance into Germany when so much was still in flux in south-east Europe. The Serbs were ready to cross the Danube but their focus was now on the formation of a greater Serbia. In the last two months of 1918 the allied command on which Franchet d'Esperey's authority depended evaporated, and on 21 November 1918, as the Balkan front widened while the communications network floundered, the French decided to divide even their command into two – the Army of the Orient and the Army of the Danube (Fassy 2003: 422–33).

So is the view that it was on the Salonika front that the war was won and lost a myth of Ludendorff's own creation? The answer to that question has three parts and each of them is more nuanced than the dramatic strategic vocabulary of both the First Quartermaster General and Franchet d'Esperey suggests.

When the allied armies began their offensive on 15 September, the Bulgarian army had warned OHL that the Entente forces might break through in the Vardar valley and cut the railway with catastrophic consequences. They requested artillery and six divisions. On 17 September OHL refused, saying that all forces must be concentrated on the western front because this was where the decision of the whole war would be reached. Hindenburg added that, if need be, the Bulgarians must accept the loss of Macedonia in the interests of the overall situation. The local German commander in the Balkans was clear that, if Macedonia was lost, Bulgaria would probably collapse (Mühlmann 1942: 229–31).

Hindenburg's initial response to the Balkan breakthrough reveals how complacent Germany had become about its allies and their needs. As a result, both he and Ludendorff were more shocked by Bulgaria's surrender on 29 September than they should have been. But his reply also went to the

heart of how OHL's strategy was conceived. The four Central Powers were geographically contiguous as the Entente was not. Linked by secure land lines of communications, predominantly railways but also canals and rivers, they could shuttle troops on interior lines from one front to another, so fire-fighting their way out of crises at very different points of the compass. In both 1916 and 1917, the Entente powers had sought to coordinate their attacks in time given that they could not do so in space, in order to pull the Central Powers' reserves in different directions simultaneously. Their plan failed in both years. In 1918, the Entente prioritised the western front but what they had tried to do in 1916 and 1917 now worked. By the autumn of 1918 the internal communication networks of the Central Powers were creaking through over-use, over-extension and inadequate maintenance. More importantly, they were running out of men, and so no longer had the reserves to cover all points on their defensive perimeter. The German offensives in the west of the first half of 1918 had cost them about 900,000 dead, wounded and missing, while extending the length of front they had to hold. Over the course of July 685,000 men fell sick, nearly 400,000 of them with influenza; only a few battalions mustered more than 600 men (against an establishment of 850), and often their effective rifle strength was only 200–250 (Oberkommando des Heeres 1944: 516, 522). Because the Germans could no longer reinforce the Balkan front from other fronts, they lost an ally, and with it yet more men. It was not that the Balkan front was decisive; it was that it did not stand in isolation, and so defeat here could not be separated from the situation elsewhere.

The central position occupied by Germany and its allies rendered the interaction between fronts particularly acute for them, but it still had consequences for the Entente as well. External lines of communications through submarine-infested waters made the Entente's fronts more separable; and so it was even harder to meet Franchet d'Esperey's calls for transport by sea than it was for the Central Powers to push more men in by rail.

Ludendorff made the point about the interactions between fronts clear when he briefed the officers of OHL on 30 September. He described how six divisions were on their way to Niš and one to Constantinople, and then pointed out that 'we thus lose seven divisions for use in the west or against Romania'. He went on to make a more general point about manpower: 'Twenty-two divisions must be broken up. The numerical superiority of the Entente thus increases to thirty or forty divisions' (Ludendorff 1920: 524). What had happened at Amiens was not so separate from what was happening in the Balkans. In his memoirs Ludendorff (1919, vol. 2: 679) opened his chapter on 'the last phase' with a paragraph that conflated the two:

> August 8th was the black day of the German Army in the history of this war. This was the worst experience that I had to go through, except for the events that, from September 15th onwards, took place on the Bulgarian Front and sealed the fate of the Quadruple Alliance.

With this statement Ludendorff introduced a further reason why Bulgaria's surrender was decisive and one which is too often overlooked: the collapse of the German-led coalition. Ironically, this process was initiated by victory: the punitive terms of the treaties of Brest-Litovsk and Bucharest imposed on Russia and Romania in March and May 1918 meant that Germany's allies had no reason to carry on fighting. Austria-Hungary had now achieved its aims in the Balkans and in the east; the Ottoman empire, although it had lost its hold on Arabia, could rekindle its pan-Turanian ambitions in the Caucasus and Central Asia; and Bulgaria had fulfilled its programme of war aims at the expense of Serbia and Romania. None of Germany's allies had any interest in its war in the west, and only Austria-Hungary contributed any troops to it, a symbolic two divisions in 1918 itself. And yet Germany dragooned them into its continuation. For Austria-Hungary, Germany had become 'the secret enemy' (Rauchensteiner 2013: 668–74). The Ottomans felt similarly resentful towards the Germans, and as both powers pursued their trans-Caucasian ambitions in the late summer of 1918 open conflict simmered (Mühlmann 1940: 211).

However, it was Bulgaria that broke with Berlin first. In doing so, it set in train two trends which ensured defeat. First, it caused the collapse of the one remaining front in which Germany's allies, all three of them being Balkan powers, had a common interest. As a result, the Ottoman empire lost its hopes of recovering its foothold in Europe and was physically sundered from the munitions and money channelled to it via the Balkans. As Ludendorff's memoirs recognised, this was a coalition war and his alliance had failed. Each of the Central Powers negotiated its own way out of the war and in its own time. As the Quadruple Alliance fragmented, the Entente consolidated – at least for the time being – and it won the war as a result.

After the formal fighting was over, Ludendorff and his military colleagues would increasingly turn to a third reason to explain their defeat, to go alongside Amiens and the Bulgarian capitulation. Germany had been 'stabbed in the back' by subversion at home, itself fomented by allied propaganda and the allied blockade. Hunger had forced the workers into revolution. Chronologically, this explanation was always the most tendentious, because the revolutions in Germany and elsewhere followed, rather than preceded, Ludendorff's insistence on an armistice. And yet Ludendorff had already flagged up the danger when he spoke to the officers of OHL on 1 October 1918. One eyewitness commented on his appearance when he arrived, comparing his resigned and heroic countenance with that of Siegfried, fatally wounded by Hagen's spear in his back (Thaer 1958: 234).

'The stab in the back' makes a more profound point: that in a world war fought by fully mobilised societies on multiple fronts the notion that any one event or factor can itself explain the war's outcome courts over-simplification. The polarisation of debate that says the war was won and lost on one particular front, or because of a dominant factor or by a single army, fundamentally misunderstands what the war had become by 1918. Subsequent

generations would call it 'total war', a reflection of the powers of destruction which industrialisation, allied to scientific and technical prowess, could create. But the other aspect of total war was social and ideological. For Ludendorff, this would be the lesson of the defeat that he would carry into the 1920s and 1930s, and which he encapsulated in *Der totale Krieg*, the title of his book published in 1935. Provocatively but revealingly his British publishers called the English edition *The Nation at War*, and translated *Der totale Krieg* not as 'total' but 'totalitarian' war. The subordination of the individual to the state was both the response to the stab in the back and the insurance against its repetition. Franchet d'Esperey had looked back in time – to Napoleon – to inspire his victory; sadly Ludendorff, prompted by defeat, was more prescient.

Notes

1 On the writing of Ludendorff's memoirs while in Sweden, see Uhle-Wettler (1995: 378).
2 As reported by the Saxon military representative at OHL, Major General von Eulitz, to General von Merz, 1 August 1919, and quoted in Ludendorff (1920: 524–5); this is the view also adopted by the only official German account of the operations in Macedonia: Reichsarchiv (1925: 18–19, 179–80).
3 Diary of Heinrich-Gottfried Vietinghoff, 28 September 1918, Bundesarchiv-Militärchiv, N574/2. I am grateful to Jürgen Förster for this reference. Admittedly others were not so sanguine: see Afflerbach (2018: 469).

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21 'The Real Gardeners of Salonika'

The Imperial War Graves Commission on the Macedonian Front

Glyn Prysor

In August 1916, while the Battle of the Somme still raged on the Western Front, a man called Gerald Radcliffe arrived at Salonika (now Thessaloniki). He was there to establish a Graves Registration Unit, with the task of recording the burial places of British Army servicemen who had died in hospitals around the city and the mountains to the north.

British troops had been in Greece since the previous autumn, around the time that arrangements for military graves started to become more formalised in France and Belgium. It was not until May 1917 that the Imperial War Graves Commission was formally created by Royal Charter. Now called the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, this was the body that would be responsible for the commemoration of servicemen and women of the British Empire across the world. At the time of its formation, organised graves units were only operating in three areas: the Western Front, Egypt and Salonika. The Macedonian Front therefore formed a vital element of the IWGC's early work.

Writing to his superiors in London, Radcliffe described the challenging conditions he faced in 1916. Accommodation for his team of five men consisted of one small tent. This also served as their office, even though there was no furniture. When the military authorities arranged for some to be sent, Radcliffe wrote: 'When the chairs and tables arrive I do not know what the men will do, or where they will go at night…' (CWGC Archive: SDC 4 / DGRE 6). The Graves Registration Unit struggled with many of the same difficulties as the soldiers. Sickness was rife, the climate hot and hostile, and there was no motor transport, meaning laborious travel on foot in a region with few roads. And yet the work progressed. Burial grounds were fenced off, identification markers installed, and lists compiled. By April 1917, around 2,500 graves had been registered and marked (Longworth 2010: 18–23).

By November 1918, with Bulgaria defeated, agreements were quickly reached between the British and Greek authorities on the provision of land for war cemeteries, and the records of some 11,000 graves were almost complete. In the early 1920s, the Imperial War Graves Commission began to construct permanent cemeteries around Salonika, and so-called 'mountain cemeteries' to the north, on the former battlefields. The architect commissioned to design them was Sir Robert Lorimer. He and his firm also worked

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on IWGC cemeteries in Italy and Egypt, as well as the Scottish National War Memorial in Edinburgh. Of all of these, Lorimer would state that the 'mountain cemeteries' posed the greatest challenges. Some were liable to flood, others were sited on unstable earth. New quarries had to be created and roads constructed to facilitate the creation of formal burial places.

Graves in Salonika itself were marked with standard IWGC headstones: upright markers inscribed with regimental symbols, religious emblems and personal details, along with – in many cases – an epitaph chosen by the next-of-kin of the deceased. Each cemetery contained a 'Cross of Sacrifice': a common feature found in IWGC cemeteries across the world. Local plants and building materials were used for horticultural and architectural features, but these cemeteries largely echoed the design of those on the Western Front.

The 'mountain cemeteries' on the battlefields to the north of Salonika looked very different. Rather than headstones above the graves, each was marked by low, rectangular 'pedestal' stones, attached to deep concrete blocks which were driven into the earth. Instead of a 'Cross of Sacrifice', each cemetery contained a stone cairn to act as a focal point. Horticulture was sparse, and walls and other features were more prosaic and practical. This aesthetic and material approach was intended to be in keeping with the rugged environment and landscape, as well as mitigating against floods and earth movements, but was also due to concerns about potentially negative local feeling and the threat of desecration.

By the end of 1921, 17 cemeteries had been planned and 8 were already under construction. After five years, the work was largely finished. Bearing in mind the logistical difficulties, this was a significant achievement. As in France and Belgium, the IWGC marked the graves of both those who could be identified, and those who remained unknown. During the early years, there was intense debate about the form of memorials to honour those with no known grave, and this led to the creation of perhaps the most significant British Empire memorial in the region.

A monument in honour of all those who fought in the British Salonika Force had been planned for several years after the end of the conflict, and donations from veterans raised substantial funds. Since it would have a permanent presence in Salonika, the IWGC undertook to maintain the memorial and, crucially, to supervise its construction. This role meant that the Commission was able to suggest that the memorial should incorporate the names of the campaign's 'missing': those whose remains had not been recovered or identified, or whose graves were lost or unmarked.

This decision proved highly significant in the process of the British Empire's commemoration of World War I. The emotive and controversial question of how best to mark the military campaigns where they were fought was under consideration by a national committee, chaired by the Earl of Midleton. There were significant logistical, political and economic challenges to overcome, not least the absence of any coordinated construction

plan. In large part because of the precedent of the Salonika Force memorial, the Midleton Committee recommended that memorials across the world to commemorate battles should be combined with the IWGC's memorials to the 'missing'. This paved the way for the Menin Gate in Ypres, the Thiepval Memorial in France and many others which today rank among the world's most significant commemorative architecture.

Also designed by Robert Lorimer, what became known as the Doiran Memorial took the form of an obelisk flanked by lions sculpted by Walter Gilbert (see Hussey 1931:100). Two thousand names were inscribed on marble plaques fixed to four pillars around the central monument. Constructed largely by local workers, it was built among the former trenches of 'Colonial Hill', not far from a large cemetery which contained the graves of many of those who died in the fighting of September 1918. Surrounded by pine trees and rosemary bushes, it was, as historian Philip Longworth (2010: 109–11) put it, 'a symbol of the doggedness of the men who fought there and of the others who built their memorial'.

The memorial at Doiran was formally unveiled on 25 September 1926, in the presence of many dignitaries, a guard of honour from the Royal Navy warship HMS *Resolution* and another from the Greek Army, along with a detachment of Serbian officers. Large numbers of public attendees were also reported. Among the IWGC's representatives was Sir Frederic Kenyon, Director of the British Museum, who had helped the Commission define its earliest principles.

General Sir George Milne, former commander of the British Salonika Force, was by now Chief of the Imperial General Staff and unable to attend. Presiding in his stead, Lieutenant-General Sir George Macdonogh – a Commissioner of the IWGC – passed on Milne's recollections of

> the friendships formed by British officers and men with their French, Italian and Serbian comrades here, but more especially the esteem and affection in which they held the people and the Army of this fair land of Greece, in which they fought and where so many of them are sleeping their last sleep.

Macdonogh thanked the Greek people and highlighted 'the bonds of sympathy that unite our nations.' He paid tribute to those who died in battle, those who perished of disease in the Struma Valley, and those lost in the Aegean Sea. He said of the memorial:

> It is not and is not intended to be a monument to the victors. The passions aroused by the War have long since been stilled, and all we have created here is a memorial to our comrades who died in the performance of their duty far from their homes and from their loved ones. It is a sign of mourning and of gratitude and not of triumph.
>
> (CWGC Archive: WG 219/18/2)

Although few at the time might have predicted it, Salonika became a place of pilgrimage. Most of those who ventured there arrived aboard specially arranged cruises, such as the voyage chronicled by the writer Ian Hay in *The Ship of Remembrance, Gallipoli-Salonika*, which was organised by the St. Barnabas Society for bereaved family members – wives, sons, daughters – and veterans. Each contributed what they could to the cost.

As the pilgrims progressed 'up country', into the mountainous former battlefields, they discovered the hillside cemeteries, with their distinctive rugged aesthetic. 'All are in beautiful condition,' wrote Hay (1927: 15).

> Few flowers grow in that climate of extremes, but the turf is crisp and clean, and the general atmosphere utterly serene and restful. Outside each cemetery, written in English and Greek, is an inscription which proclaims that the ground within is a free gift from the Greek people, to be a perpetual resting place for our dead.

In the newly constructed war graves, Hay found a physical manifestation of the scale and diversity of the British Empire's efforts, which characterise so many of the cemeteries cared for by the CWGC all over the world:

> To wander through one of these cemeteries, and note the diversity of names recorded – names of men, of ranks, of regiments, of counties, of countries – is to read in miniature the roll-call of the Empire… And the avocations of these men are an illuminating reminder of the complicated organisation which goes to make the modern army. Here we have, lying side by side, an infantry private, a sapper, an artillery bombardier, a colonel of Yeomanry, a machine-gun sergeant, a regimental stretcher-bearer, and a Maltese transport driver. Once even… I saw the grave of a Red Cross nurse, in no way differing from those of the men around her.
>
> (Hay 1927: 25–6)

There was a notable exception to this variety: most post-war visitors would rarely spot evidence of the presence of Indian forces. More than 500 of their number died in Greece between 1916 and 1920, and the majority were honoured at a dedicated burial ground in the west of Thessaloniki, known as Monastir Road Indian Cemetery. Among them were Hindus and Sikhs whose remains had been cremated, their names inscribed on panels, as well as Muslims and Christians buried in marked graves. Many served with artillery or infantry units, others with the transport, labour and mule corps. Lorimer designed a special memorial to stand within the cemetery, listing the names of 150 men whose graves lay elsewhere, but could not be marked or moved.

Over the following years, Salonika often formed part of a joint itinerary with Gallipoli, and pilgrimages continued well into the 1930s, when Cunard White Star assigned one of its top passenger liners to the trip: the

Lancastria. In the summer of 1940, with German forces poised to take control of France, the IWGC installed a new plaque on the memorial. It read (CWGC Archive: SDC 48):

> THE BRITISH EMPIRE
> COMMEMORATING HER FALLEN SONS
> HONOURS WITH THEM
> THEIR DEAD COMRADES OF THE GREEK ARMY

Around the same time, on 17 June 1940, the *Lancastria* lay off the coast of St Nazaire, assisting in the rescue of some of the last military personnel and civilians to escape from France. She was attacked by German dive bombers and sank rapidly, killing over 4,000 people. It was one of the worst maritime disasters in British history.

The installation of the new plaque was one of the last significant acts arranged by the IWGC's team in the region. The local supervisor at the time was a Canadian, Lieutenant Colonel Menzies. When German forces invaded Greece the following spring, he was forced to withdraw, leaving the cemeteries and gardeners under the supervision of his interpreter – an ex-officer of the Russian Imperial Guard named Sakharoff.

After the desecration of one cemetery by German troops, Sakharoff remonstrated with their general, and after that the graves remained largely untouched. The British government's 'Trading with the Enemy Department' sanctioned the release of some funds to Greece through the American consul, to provide for the care of the cemeteries, but rampant inflation made the money almost worthless. Eventually, regular maintenance had to be abandoned.

The IWGC returned to Salonika after World War II. Soon, the Commission's donkey was once again plodding up to the top of Colonial Hill carrying water. A professional horticulturalist was appointed to develop planting and flowers to create the atmosphere of peaceful gardens in the cemeteries around the city and the rugged beauty of the battlefield sites. Those who fought and died on the Macedonian Front were once disparagingly called 'the Gardeners of Salonika'. Today, the real gardeners of Salonika still tend their graves.

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22 War pensions in Greece

Healing the social wounds of a decade of war

Helen Gardikas Katsiadakis

This chapter is based on research on a collection of 303 case files of applicants for war benefits, pensions and allowances, originally belonging to the Greek Ministry of Finance (General Directorate of Public Accounts, Directorate of Pensions, Department of Pensions of Old War Victims, War Pensions of war victims 1912–22). They are case files created following applications filed by individuals claiming a state pension due to the death at war of their next-of-kin. The applications were processed by the regional authorities in Crete and the files are now in the possession of the Venizelos Foundation in Chania.

This is not the only existing relevant archival material. The 303 Cretan case files represent a fraction of only 0.8% of the cases of individuals applying for war pensions. At national level, the Greek General State Archives hold

1 a series of records titled 'pension deeds' (Πράξεις Συντάξεων) belonging to the Court of Auditors (Ελεγκτικό Συνέδριο) and
2 a series of nine books titled 'Proceedings of the meetings of the Council of the War Victims Fund of the years 1929–36' (Πρακτικά συνεδριάσεων του Συμβουλίου του Ταμείου Θυμάτων Πολέμου των ετών 1929–36) belonging to the Ministry of Health.

According to a 1931 estimate, the number of beneficiaries for the period of the wars between 1912 and 1922, nationwide, was at the time approximately 62,000 individuals.

Besides, the Venizelos Foundation collection of files is by no means a representative one. First, the files are limited to the island of Crete. Second, they do not represent the totality of applicants from Crete: for two reasons:

1 Out of the 303 applications studied involving 323 casualties, only three related to soldiers wounded in combat. Statistics show that in all wars the soldiers wounded in combat far outnumber the dead at a ratio ranging between two to one and ten to six. As injury cases are underrepresented

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in these case files, the figures suggest that the collection is by no means either complete or representative.

2 Furthermore, when checked against other records of war casualties, for instance, a pamphlet published to commemorate the men of the 34th infantry regiment, most of the Cretan soldiers listed in the pamphlet do not appear among the casualties in the case files. Similarly, a catalogue of Cretans fallen in the battle of Skra, compiled at the Ministry of Defence on 27 July 1918, and found in Venizelos' private papers, lists 69 soldiers. In the case files, there are only eight battle of Skra casualties.

Besides, other lists are also incomplete: Casualties in the case files of the Venizelos Foundation collection do not appear in the comprehensive list of war casualties published by the Greek Ministry of Defence on the centenary of the Greek War of Independence.

Given these limitations, this chapter examines to what extent this small sample helps us form a picture about state policy, the nature of the wars, the profile of the victims and the fate of the survivors.[1]

The need to care for the war victims was recognised from the first years of Greek statehood. Initially, pensions were awarded to ex-servicemen individually, by decree.

In the prevalent cultural context that involved a glorification of nationalism, the individual's sacrifice to the patriotic cause increasingly shifted towards the obligation of the state to its citizens, who had sacrificed themselves to this cause.

The state fulfilled this obligation in August 1852, twenty years after the end of the devastating Greek War of Independence, when one of its most prominent heroes, Admiral Antonios Kriezis, – Prime Minister between 12 December 1849 and 16 May 1854 – introduced the first comprehensive legislation awarding retirement pensions and disability or sickness pensions to combatants as well as pensions to widows and orphans of men who had died in action (Government Gazette, hereafter GG A 34:1852 Law ΣΕ΄). Thereafter, with the exception of minor amendments over the years[2], for half a century there appeared no social need for any major alterations to the law, as Greece lived a period of peace, albeit an unsettled one. During that period, the Greek army evolved from an army consisting solely of career soldiers to one consisting predominantly of conscripts. As a result, the volume of the Greek armed forces increased from approximately 30,000 men in 1906 to some 120,000 men on the eve of the First Balkan War. In 1878, universal conscription became mandatory (Law ΨΙΣΤ' 27/11/1878), but the method by which it was enforced – ballot – and the facility of buying exemption rendered its mandatory character ineffectual. Matters changed at the end of 1909, when conscription became literally universal (GG A 262: 1909 Law 3402).

The long period of peace, however, was about to change in the early years of the 20th century. The men who were called to the colours and fought

between 1912 and 1922 were young men, mostly the breadwinning members of peasant families. Their temporary absence in the barracks or at the front posed a heavy burden on the rest of the family. In fact, shortly after the September 1912 mobilisation the Government set up a Central Committee presided over by the Archbishop of Athens, to collect and administer funds and goods destined for the welfare of the conscripts and their families (*Neon Asty*, 27 September 1912).

Indeed, during the first months of the 1912 war, urgent needs were covered primarily by charity initiatives. During the short interval in the fighting between the two Balkan Wars, a makeshift provision, a decree dated 22 May 1913 (GG A 102: 1913 Royal Decree), attempted to transfer to the State the responsibility for the first urgent needs of the war victims: the decree set up a 17-member Committee presided over by the Prime Minister himself and including the Minister of the Interior, the Governor of the National Bank and other members of the political and financial élite. Its task was to raise funds and to provide for the war victims and their families according to the Committee's own judgement. It is clear that this committee could not cope with the hundreds of casualties of the heavy fighting in the Second Balkan War that ensued.

For the first time on such a massive scale, as single young men were killed in the wars, elderly parents were left with no one to support them, often with children and grandchildren under age and with unmarried daughters in their care. Young married women, often with children, were widowed. It was clear that existing legislation could tackle neither the scale nor the increased complexity of the problems. One of the first laws was 'Law 116 on the modification and completion of the laws on military and naval pensions' of 30 December 1913 (GG A 271: 1913 Law 116). For the first time, eligibility for a pension was extended to the parents of single servicemen who had perished, to under-age siblings and unmarried sisters. The law also offered a detailed and generous interpretation of the term 'death due to war circumstances', to include war-related contagious diseases as causes of death. An additional article extended the benefits of the law to relatives of the victims of the guerrilla war fought in Macedonia between 1904 and 1908.

Two subsequent laws a year later (both GG A 361: 1914) provided care and compensation for those wounded in combat. Law 437 established 35 military hospitals throughout the country. Law 438 enabled servicemen who suffered wounds or sickness during the war to enjoy either a retirement pension or a temporary disability allowance.[3]

World War I and the domestic crisis that split Greece into two camps and two states had its effect on the principles and scope of social care policies.

Although the fighting and the casualties peaked during the Balkan Wars and later, during the Asia Minor War and debacle, there was a significant number of casualties among the Greek population, at sea during the allied blockade, on land owing to the presence of the allied troops in Macedonia, and above all during the brief period in which the Greek army joined

the allied war effort in 1918. Mobilisation also took its toll on the population, with many young men contracting tuberculosis and other contagious diseases.

If the figures for Crete recorded in the Venizelos Foundation collection files are representative of the whole of Greece, the numbers of those who died during the Macedonian fighting and the lesser incidents before were just under a quarter of the total number of casualties for the entire decade, a very high percentage, given the limited exposure of Greek troops to enemy fire.

When Eleftherios Venizelos' liberal government returned to power in Greece in June 1917, not only did it reunite the country and join the Entente Powers in the war effort. It also introduced wide-scale social reforms, some of which were directly related to the war effort. First, it became apparent that social care for the war victims and their families should acquire a more regular and permanent character. Until 1917, all pensions were awarded by Royal Decree by the Ministries of Defence and Navy. After 1917, they fell under the jurisdiction of the newly founded Ministry of Social Care, created for the limited purpose of providing for the refugees, of handing out payments to and caring for the men under colours and their families on a regular basis, and for the recruitment of volunteers (GG A 112: 1917 and GG A 173: 1917).

Though there had been earlier initiatives, the care for the disabled and sick servicemen was the subject of a comprehensive 1917 law (GG A 174: 1917). It extended the range of those eligible for health care to siblings of the servicemen. The allowance could be either a one-off sum or a temporary or permanent monthly sum, and various other types of care such as jobs, common meals, free hospitalisation in hospitals and asylums. A Committee of 15–20 members headed by the Minister of Social Care was given extensive responsibilities for the implementation of the provisions of the law. A special department of the Ministry was responsible for the 'care of the war victims' under the authority of the Committee.

Secondly, towards the end of the war, during the battles of Skra and Doiran on the Macedonian Front, the cost of human sacrifice shocked the Greek world and initiated a wave of private donations in support of the families of the victims. One individual donated the sum of 10,000 drachmas to Venizelos for the families of Cretans who fell in the battle of Skra. The catalogue compiled by the Ministry of Defence for the purpose lists 69 dead Cretan soldiers.[4]

The great human cost of the war was the object of the first legislation following the treaty of Sèvres. Law 1960 (GG A 24: 1920 Law 1960) established a new authority to implement the provisions of the law, the 15-member 'Επιτροπή περιθάλψεως των θυμάτων πολέμου' (Committee for the Care of War Victims) and laid down its rules of procedure and its remit. It assigned the central administration of the 1915 institution of kiosks to the 'Πανελλήνιος Ένωσις Τραυματιών Πολέμου 1912–18' (Panhellenic Union of Men Wounded in Combat 1912–18). A maximum amount of three million drachmas a

year was set in the budget for the care of the war victims. The major contribution of the 1920 law was that it recognised the status of soldiers 'missing in action'. It also extended the benefits of previous legislation to those affected by the war after August 1916, including those involved in the domestic conflicts resulting from the National Schism. The new law also introduced three major reforms:

1 All those eligible for pensions under previous laws now became eligible for health care.
2 The status of parenthood was recognised, as were the rights that accrued from this recognition, to adults who had taken war orphans under their care.
3 Wounded servicemen, war widows and orphans were granted preferential treatment regarding admission to the civil service and schools.[5]

And then came the Smyrna catastrophe of August 1922. The government apparatus fell into disarray. For those who had served in the military, it took the state two full years to produce the necessary legislation: a 51-article comprehensive law detailing the procedures for awarding pensions (GG A 175/ 1924 Law 3122). The responsibility for the granting of pensions was decentralised and all matters were transferred from the Ministry of Health Care (formerly Social Care) to local 'Pension Committees'.

Article 16 of this law is a testimonial to the tragedy, disguised in legal wording:

1 Those who in any way in war or mobilisation went missing are considered killed. Their disappearance is certified by the Ministry of Defence or Navy.
2 For those who went missing in Russia, Asia Minor or elsewhere, during the last war, if the above data are missing and if the military units to which they belonged have been disbanded and therefore it is impossible to collect adequate data, the Directorate of the Ministry of Defence or Navy issues a certificate based on a sworn statement certifying the disappearance, given by two reputable witnesses before a competent court of justice in public session at the request of the family members applying for a pension… The date of their disappearance is considered to be the 31st of December 1923.

The law prescribed a detailed process for making the awards: Applications were to be processed by local three-member committees presided over by the President of the regional Court of First Instance. Provisional pensions were awarded by the Accounts Offices of the Prefectures. Next, following an auditing procedure by a national-level Committee of Pension Auditing, the Minister of Health Care issued a pension diploma that entitled the beneficiary to his/her permanent pension.

In March 1929, a major reform provided additional benefits to the pension beneficiaries and founded an independent body, the 'War Victims Fund' (Ταμείον Θυμάτων Πολέμου) to fund and administer these benefits (GG A 1929/106 Law 4042).

The sheer volume of individual applications (62,000 according to a 1931 estimate),[6] posed a huge burden on the administration, in many departments and at all levels Commissions of the Courts of First Instance, regional and local authorities, military authorities, police authorities and the central administration. Lengthy correspondence between departments was often unavoidable, when necessary records were missing – and the files studied for this chapter show that this was the rule rather than the exception.

The financial burden on the state budget was also considerable, especially at a time of financial crisis, according to the table for the fiscal years 1925–26 and 1926–27, for which there are comprehensive figures:

Expenses for war victims (in drachmas) (Andreadis 1929: 92)

1925–1926	220,000,000
1926–1927	350,000,000

Out of the sample of 322 applicants, 190 (59%) were female – this included mainly widows and thirty-three unmarried women with no living parents; 132 were male – that is mainly fathers and nine minor brothers. Many of the applicants applied on behalf of more than one beneficiary, wife, descendants or siblings, in most cases one or two; in two cases the beneficiaries were seven.

The percentage of refugee applicants is also noteworthy: 60 applicants or 18.6% were Asia Minor refugees. Out of them, 48 were female and only 12 were men.

Out of the sample of 320 casualties, dead or missing – all men – 254 were single, 57 were married, four were orphans and four were widowers at the time of the incident.

Not all were killed or went missing in combat: 90 were killed in action; 99 went missing in action; 15 died in captivity; 84 died in hospital from various causes; 18 were discharged for medical reasons and died shortly after as civilians and 6 were lost at sea.

These are just a few of the findings that can be extracted from the database I have compiled.

On the micro-historical level, here is a small selection of personal histories of tragedy, resilience and despair.

1 I have come across four cases of refugees, two of them widows, who lost two sons, another refugee who lost two brothers, while one soldier went missing in action leaving behind three refugee unmarried sisters.
2 The resilience of one young refugee is quite admirable: Petros Amarantos, an orphan refugee aged fourteen in 1922, lost two brothers, who went missing in action when the front collapsed in August. His pension

was suspended when he came of age in 1926. In 1938, having fought his way out of poverty, he set up a hairdressers' training school in Athens, the first of its kind, a school that dominated the industry in the 1960s and 1970s and is still running.

3 There are numerous cases of utter despair and solidarity. But one stands out because of the value of a testimony related to the incident, the tragic fate of private Fanourios Kirlakis. He was reported missing on 5 September 1918. As he was not among the dead of the battle of Doiran on that day and did not return home, his wife Chrysoula applied for a pension on 8 June 1919. There followed an investigation into his fate, that produced a statement under oath written at Sidirokastro on 25 July 1919, by a corporal, from another company. "I did not meet Private Fanourios Kirlakis, during the operations on Mt Beles", he testified before his superior officer in charge of the investigation. "I didn't even know him, when on the 26th of January my company, the 2nd, was ordered to patrol along the boundary line at the tri-point, where our outpost is. At a distance of about 800 metres there were the Bulgarian field dressing stations. In the month of February, I don't remember the exact date, I entered a Bulgarian station and found a corpse lying on a bed, on its back and in only its underwear. Above the bed a jacket and a pair of trousers were hanging. Inside the jacket, I found a letter whose sender was Chrysanthi Kirlaki. From the content of the letter I came to the conclusion that the sender was the wife of this man." This highly unlikely testimony under oath allowed Chrysanthi to find closure and become eligible for a pension in 1919, at a time when the status of a soldier 'missing in action' had not yet been recognised by law.

Beyond the tragic individual stories, what do the records tell us about the post-war society of Crete?

The island had not seen a major upheaval since the 1866–69 'Great Cretan Revolution', though there were disturbances also in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In the first quarter of the 20th century young men were sent off to war intermittently over a period of ten years. In this overwhelmingly rural society, in most cases, as our sources reveal, these men were the only family protectors ('προστάτης της οικογενείας' is the term used in the sources). These men, almost 80% of them single, had provided a living for their elderly parents, their minor siblings and their unmarried adult sisters. The married men, who went off to war, had supported their wives and children.

In these conditions the relative importance of the toll of World War I is considerable. Twenty-one were killed in the First Balkan War and 26 in the Second; 70 perished in World War I and 195 in the Asia Minor campaign. Out of the latter, 97 (one in two) went missing in action during the collapse of the front in August 1922. The 70 who perished in World War I represent

22.5% of the total losses of the sample, while the Balkan Wars represent a total loss of just 15%.

But in studying the social consequences of this devastation it is unwise to isolate the two years of Greece's involvement in World War I from the entire ten-year period of war. This concept underlies the law of 1924, that recognised what had already become part of Greek popular culture, i.e., that the 1912–22 decade was one single period of military operations in which the same young men were protagonists and victims.

In a predominantly rural society that had no pension social security scheme,[7] and women were not considered a part of the working population, a man of working age, i.e., aged less than 60 or 65, supported his wife, his minor children, his adult unmarried sisters and his relatives in the ascending line who were too old or too sick to work. This was the socioeconomic framework. This role was now assumed by the state. These people, widowers, widows, orphaned minors and unmarried women, now heads of the family in economic terms, collected a regular monthly allowance, however small. It was not only a matter of survival. It was also a qualitative change.[8]

Notes

1 A database to record the data was created, using Heurist, a data management platform developed for humanities scholars at the University of Sydney. The database is hosted by the University of Sydney and is accessible at https://heuristplus.sydney.edu.au/heurist/?db=hkats_war_victim_pensions&website. My special thanks are due to its developer Ian Johnson for his invaluable assistance. All dates prior to 1923 are in the Julian calendar.

2 A law voted by the 1863–64 Constituent Assembly: GG A 49:1864 (Law ΣτΑ΄ on modification of the pension laws for the land army and the navy) and another one passed in December 1911: GG A 332: 3948 (on adding provisions to the laws on military pensions and on replacing articles 11 and 12 of law ΣΕ΄of 1852).

3 Law 437 'on establishment of Military Hospitals' set up 35 military hospitals of three classes (5, 13 and 17 respectively).

4 A catalogue of Cretans fallen in the battle of Skra, compiled at the Ministry of Defence on 27 July 1918 http://www.venizelosarchives.gr/rec.asp?id=59294 (http://www.venizelosarchives.gr/rec.asp?id=59322 Mich. Papadakis to Venizelos, Kifisia, 30 June 1918).

5 Ten years later, a 1930 law (GG A 181: 1930 Law 4758) extended the benefits of the law to two categories of victims thitherto excluded: (a) the wounded and the families of those who died while serving in the National Defence Movement Κίνημα Εθνικής Αμύνης and (b) the wounded and the families of those killed defending against the joint German-Bulgarian attack on Rupel and Kavala.

6 Report by N.Iasonidis on the proceedings of the Ministry of Social Care, 30 December 1931. Benaki Museum. Venizelos Archive, folder 134/26–27: http://www.venizelosarchives.gr/rec.asp?id=27875.

7 Legislation providing social security for farmers was introduced in 1961.

8 In 2021, while the book was being prepared for publication, Alexandros Makris completed his PhD on the subject of veterans and war victims, which I have not been able to consult. The title of the thesis is «Οι κήρυκες της ιδέας του έθνους»: Παλαιοί Πολεμιστές, Ανάπηροι και Θύματα Πολέμου στην Ελλάδα (1912–1940), University of Athens 2021.

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23 The Greek soldier-writers of World War I and testimony as a subversive discourse

Maria Nikolopoulou

Writing about World War I was a mass phenomenon in all the countries involved, leading to the emergence of the soldier-poet or the soldier-writer (Beaupré 2006). They attempted to express the violence and absurdity of modern mechanised warfare, to an uncomprehending and incredulous civilian audience (Fussell 2013: 95–8, 150). They often employed literary modes of writing to narrate and make sense of their experience (Fussell 2013: 168–83). Thus, the soldier-writers faced a crisis of representation, connected to the quest for a discourse that could present the indescribable experience of the trenches (Beaupré 2011: 42–3; Fussell 2013: 184–9). The 'discourse of testimony' emerged during World War I as the immediate representation of historical experience by a simple person. It is narrated in the first-person and is only guaranteed by his sincerity and his sense of moral duty to state what he lived and suffered. It is exactly the suffering of 'radical evil' that differentiates testimony from other forms of war narratives (Felman and Laub 1992: 6; Winter 2006: 239–43).

Until then, testimony functioned within institutional frameworks, such as the religious or the judicial. With the advent of modernity, however, the witness claims the autonomy of his testimony and challenges certain institutions and the discourses connected to them. Many of these texts were read as literature and the literary field was redefined to a certain extent to include them, putting aside the romantic concept of the autonomy of art (Beaupré 2011: 49–55; Detue and Lacoste 2016: 3, 8–9).

The Greek soldier-writers (namely Theodoros Laskaridis and Stratis Myrivilis) fought on the Macedonian Front and published testimonies about their experience of war almost immediately after their demobilisation. In the case of Myrivilis and most Greek soldiers, this happened after the end of Asia Minor War in 1923. Laskaridis published a number of short stories in the newspaper *Rizospastis* from November 1920 and Myrivilis serialised the first version of his novel *Η ζωή εν τάφω* [*Life in the Tomb*] in the newspaper *Kambana,* which he began publishing in Lesvos in 1923.[1] The aim of this chapter is to examine how the testimony about the experience of the Macedonian Front emerged as a discourse of dissent, connected to the post-war concerns and the gradual introduction of Greek society to modernity.

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For Greece, World War I is closely connected to the Balkan Wars (1912–13), the National Schism (1915–16, see Clogg 1992: 87–93; Gallant 2001: 129–34), and the Greek-Turkish War in Asia Minor (1919–22). Owing to the national schism, participation in the Macedonian Front became for the Greek troops a political matter reflecting party loyalty. Moreover, the international dimension of the war, the fluidity of alignments and identities, advanced war technology and life in the trenches differentiated experience of the Macedonian Front from the Balkan wars and the Asia Minor campaign. This led Laskaridis and Myrivilis to distance themselves from the communities shaped by the national discourses and to question all the institutions and forms of discourse associated with the war.

Publication of testimonies in the press was an international phenomenon during and after World War I. Testimony emerges as a discourse, associated with the newspaper's heterogeneous context (Thérenty 2007: 22–3; Boucharenc, Martens & van Nuijs 2011: 11; Vaillant 2011: 27). This fluidity is accentuated even more in writers such as Laskaridis and Myrivilis, who also functioned as publishers, editors-in-chief and journalists.

Laskaridis remained obscure until 2011, when Nikos Sarantakos collected his short stories in a volume (Laskaridis 2011). Laskaridis belonged to the Greek community of Bulgaria and was born in 1896 in Anchialos/ Поморие. After the expulsion of the Greek population from Eastern Rumelia in 1906, he lived in Constantinople. In 1916, while he was studying, the Turkish police expelled him to Bulgaria, because he was liable to conscription in the Bulgarian army. He fought on the Macedonian Front in the Kaimakchalan region, against the Serbian army. There he deserted to the Serbs in November 1916 and remained in Serbian prisoners' camps for a year. He escaped and managed to reach Athens. He started working as a journalist in the newspaper *Rizospastis,* and later became a member of SEKE,[2] the forerunner of the Communist Party of Greece.

Laskaridis' case highlights the fluidity of identities in the belligerent Balkans, where often national and ethnic identity clashed, and thus such conscripts were treated with suspicion by all sides. This forced conscription in an army with which he did not ethnically identify, defined Laskaridis' stance vis-à-vis the war, as shown by his actions and texts.

Laskaridis suffered from neurasthenia owing to the traumatic experience of war and imprisonment, and he was obsessed with suicide. After two attempts, he shot himself in his office in December 1921. He was 26 years old (Sarantakos 2011a: 19) (Figure 23.1).

In late November 1920, it was evident that the newly elected Gounaris government would continue the engagement in the Asia Minor campaign, despite some suggestions before the elections that the army would be demobilised. The communist newspaper *Rizospastis* started publishing pacifist short stories by P. Slaveykov almost every day, under the rubric 'Bulgarian life'. The name could refer to Petko Slaveykov or his son Pencho Slaveykov, both well-known Bulgarian writers. Laskaridis appeared to be the translator

Θ. ΛΑΣΚΑΡΙΔΗΣ

Εἰς τὸ ἄνθος τῆς ἡλικίας ἐξέλιπε πρὸ διμήνου περίπου ἐκλεκτὸς συνεργάτης καὶ λαμπρὸς φίλος ὁ Θ. Λασκαρίδης.

Γεννηθεὶς εἰς τὰ 1895 εἰς τὸν Πύργον τῆς Βουλγαρίας ἀπὸ γονεῖς πλουσίους μετέβη ἔφηβος ὢν εἰς Κωνσταντινούπολιν διὰ νὰ συμπληρώσῃ τὰς σπουδάς του. Ἤρχισε γράφων ἐκεῖ ὑπὸ ψευδώνυμον εἰς διάφορα περιοδικὰ φύλλα. Φύσις ἐπαναστατικὴ εἰς ὅλα διέκρινε πάντοτε τὰ ἔργα του, ὅσοι δὲ τὸν ἐγνώρισαν πολὺ ἀντελήφθησαν ἀναμφιβόλως τὸ μικρόβιον τῆς μεγαλοφυΐας ἀνεπτυγμένον πολὺ ἐν αὐτῷ.

Ἐν τούτοις ὁ Θ. Λασκαρίδης ἔπασχεν. Θῦμα καὶ αὐτὸς ἀντιλήψεων μελλουσῶν γενεῶν εἶχεν ἑτοιμασθῇ διὰ τὸν ἀγῶνά του ὡς ὁ ἴδιος ἔλεγεν.

Μυστηριώδης πάντοτε σχεδὸν καὶ δι' αὐτοὺς ἀκόμη τοὺς φίλους του ἔσχεν ἐκλάμψεις φαεινὰς κατὰ τὰς ὁποίας ἔγραψεν ἔργα λογοτεχνικὰ ἀρκετὰ καλά.

Δυστυχῶς ὅμως μία ἔμμονος ἰδέα του τὴν ὁποίαν δὲν κατώρθωσαν φίλοι καὶ συνάδελφοι νὰ ἀπαλείψουν τοῦ ἄπλισε τὴν χεῖρα διά τρίτην φοράν. Εἰς πυροβολισμὸς ἠκούσθη. Ὁ Θεόδωρος Λασκαρίδης ἦτο νεκρὸς πρὶν ἔτι συμπληρώσῃ τὸ 26ον ἔτος τῆς ἡλικίας του.

Γαῖαν ἔχοις ἐλαφρὰν ἀείμνηστε καὶ καλὲ φίλε.

Figure 23.1 Obituary for Laskaridis in journal *Theatron*, February 1922.

(Slaveykov 1920a). A month later it was disclosed that he was the writer of all the texts published under the name of P. Slaveykov (Slaveykov 1920b; Laskaridis 1921: 5–6). It was not unusual at the time for obscure writers and women to present certain texts as fictional translations, trying to pass off their writing as the work of established foreign authors (Nikolopoulou 2008: 110). Nevertheless, Laskaridis' decision to present himself as translator was probably related to the danger of political persecution, rather than authorial obscurity.

In his short stories, Laskaridis ferociously criticises the institutions that led to the war, presents it as utterly useless and absurd and describes the horror of warfare and the loss of life realistically:

> I remember my home, my quiet family life, my studies, my efforts, which are all destined to be lost in the wuthering top of a Macedonian mountain, because such was the order of a certain Mr. Colonel, who represents the 'homeland' and the 'law'.
>
> (Laskaridis 1920a; all translations are my own)

> A deadly quiet reigns in the trenches of the other side. I gather my courage and all the hate against this illustrious 'homeland' and the 'law' that

> brought me against the Serbs and the French, so as to slay and be slain, the law that turned me into a beast, erupts into a swearword that comes unconsciously out of my mouth…[…] I stand between the two enemy lines, with torn clothes, without my cap, without my gun, my mouth foaming and I cry:
>
> Down with wars!
>
> Down with homelands!
>
> (Laskaridis 1920b)

The first-person narrator presents the horror of war filtered through his consciousness in revolt. He constantly contrasts himself to his fellow soldiers, mostly peasants, who do not react and are ready to sacrifice themselves for meaningless ideals. The narrator feels estranged from all the collective identities involved in the war. For him this is the only morally valid stance possible. The authenticity of his narrative is guaranteed by his individuality and therefore his subjectivity. In that respect, the narrator has modernistic elements, although he employs realistic techniques (cf. Winter 2006: 249 on Norton Cru).

The short stories adopt the pacifist and internationalist ideology of *Rizospastis* and shape a model of war literature, which was already sought among the intellectuals of the Left (Paroritis 1921: 145–9). Personal testimony was considered a discourse appropriate to challenge institutions both on the ideological and the aesthetic level.

Stratis Myrivilis has been the best-known soldier-writer in Greece, ever since he was incorporated in the literary canon. He was born in Lesvos in 1890, and belongs to the generation of Greek men who were in military service for almost ten years. The Balkan wars erupted in 1912 while he was studying philology in the University of Athens, and Myrivilis joined the Greek army as a volunteer. He was wounded in 1913 in a battle against the Bulgarian army in Kilkis, Macedonia. After the Balkan wars he returned to Lesvos and worked as a journalist, publishing a collection of short stories in 1915 (Figure 23.2).

Later that year he returned to Macedonia as an army reservist until mid-1916, and became a correspondent for Lesvos newspapers (Lykourgou 2017: 21–3). After Greece, under Venizelos' provisional government in Thessaloniki, entered the war on the side of the Entente in 1917, Myrivilis fought on the Macedonian Front until late 1918. In 1919, he was conscripted once again and participated in the Asia Minor campaign as a reserve officer, until October 1922, when he was demobilised (Lykourgou 1990: 17–30). War experiences unsurprisingly constitute the subject matter of his early work.

The experience of the Macedonian Front strongly influenced the ideology and aesthetic choices of Myrivilis. His novel *Life in the Tomb* was serialised in the weekly newspaper *Kambana*, which he began publishing in Lesvos in 1923, and was published in book form in 1924 without any revisions. The

Figure 23.2 Stratis Myrivilis (first on the right) accompanies Venizelos (white-hatted on the left) during the latter's visit to Lesvos in April 1915.
Source: American School of Classical Studies at Athens, Gennadius Library, Archives, Stratis Myrivilis Papers.

newspaper was the instrument of the local veterans' association. It was highly critical of the politicians and the local financial and social establishment, who took advantage of the soldiers and their families during the long war period (cf. Winter 2006: 126–7) (Figure 23.3).

At the same time, *Kambana* consciously aimed to encourage the creation and publication of literary texts drawing on life in wartime. Thus, excerpts from French and German 'war books' were published in almost every issue. The first instalment of the novel *Life in the Tomb* appeared in the third issue of the newspaper. The text was closely related to the newspaper's discursive context. Myrivilis' decision to draw his subject matter from the Macedonian Front rather than the Asia Minor campaign was probably taken because the publication of European 'war books' had already shaped an anti-war ideology, whereas the defeat in Asia Minor was a highly controversial issue, with painful repercussions.

The novel is presented as the journal kept by a dead fellow soldier of Myrivilis, Antonis Kostoulas, and is addressed to his beloved. The book begins with the discovery of the notebooks by Myrivilis, after the death of Kostoulas in a battle. Thus Myrivilis presents himself as merely the editor of the journal. This fictional technique presents the text as an authentic document, accentuating the interplay between authenticity and fictionality, the public and the personal, which is a characteristic of the text and of literary testimony in general.

Figure 23.3 Myrivilis at the entrance of his trench in the fog, Ponanto, Gevgeli, Macedonian Front, 1917.

Source: American School of Classical Studies at Athens, Gennadius Library, Archives, Stratis Myrivilis Papers.

The narrator of the journal which makes up *Life in the Tomb* recounts his experiences from the establishment of the Venizelos provisional counter-government in Thessaloniki to his conscription to the Archipelago Division and life on the Macedonian Front until the eve of his death in an attack. The title derives from the 'Orthodox liturgical lamentations of Good Friday, in which Christ is represented as the "life" laid in the tomb in order to be resurrected' (Beaton 1999: 137). But contrary to Christ, the soldiers are buried alive in the trenches, without any hope of resurrection. The Christian imagery of crucifixion is a recurrent metaphor among soldier-writers (Fussell 2013: 124, 127–9). In this novel it becomes an overarching metaphor, signifying all the details of trench life and universalising the narrator's experience (Farinou-Malamatari 1993: 72; Kehagioglou 1993: 65) (Figure 23.4).

As Myrivilis later said, the initial implied readers of the text were his 'fellow soldiers' (Rep 1930: 5). The interplay of the novel with the journalistic framework of the newspaper creates some interesting contrasts.

Figure 23.4 Myrivilis (second on the left) with fellow soldiers, Macedonian Front.
Source: American School of Classical Studies at Athens, Gennadius Library, Archives, Stratis Myrivilis Papers

For example, in issue 32, the editorial article refers to the failed *coup* against Colonel Nikolaos Plastiras and the conspirators' arrest, under the title 'Kill them, Chief' (addressing Plastiras, Anonymous 1923; cf. Clogg 1992: 100–3; Gallant 2001: 144–6, 150–1). On the same page, the twentieth second instalment of *Life in the Tomb* describes the unjust execution of three soldiers who were court-martialled as deserters from the Macedonian Front. While the editorial accuses the officers involved in the coup of responsibility for the defeat in Asia Minor and of national treason, the novel presents the case of some soldiers unjustly sentenced to death by officers because they did not live up to the heroic ideal the latter propagated. Thus, the literary and journalistic discourses both serve the newspaper's institutional critique (Figure 23.5).

World War I was the culmination of military expeditions to the periphery of Europe, which functioned in colonial terms as 'civilising expeditions' and became the field of lateral encounters, between soldiers coming from European countries and their colonies and the local population (Clarke and Horne 2018). Many European soldiers regarded the area of Macedonia

Figure 23.5 Myrivilis (centre) with his brother Kimon, shooting a machine gun, and a French officer. Veluzina, Macedonian Front 1917.
Source: American School of Classical Studies at Athens, Gennadius Library, Archives, Stratis Myrivilis Papers

and Thessaloniki in particular as a multi-ethnic and unruly space to be discovered, mapped, regulated and modernised through war, technology, science and farming (Horne 2018), and they were disappointed by the discrepancy between Greece's classical past and the reality in Macedonia (Fantauzzo 2018).

The narrator of *Life in the Tomb* discovers his country and the world through his own military expedition. He has an almost equally disenchanted orientalist outlook of Thessaloniki, which had only been annexed to the Greek state in 1913 and for the conquest of which he had fought in the Balkan wars. He also presents the entanglements of people 'from disparate racial, cultural or religious groups, with their unequal structures of power and asymmetrical alliances' (Das 2018: 173). He is especially sarcastic towards the colonial powers and the discourse of civilizing and liberating that they propagated while employing colonial soldiers. The text is also critical of the European sense of superiority, which is due to financial power and

war technology, but all the while destroying the civilisation that makes them feel superior (cf. Horne 2018: 336–7):

> We disembarked in Thessaloniki in the rain. The city was a dirty, obnoxious camp with all the races in the world. Apart from the various Western Europeans, there were Chinese and Indians, brought there from the furthermost corners of the world to be killed for the 'Freedom of the Peoples'. The streets were cramped with terrifying English cars and badly made-up prostitutes. The port reeked with swollen carcasses of dead horses. Enormous boats unloaded food and ammunition. We set up camp on a hill outside the city with no water and no trees. Other camps were nearby; each circled with barbed wire, as if they were cages for wild animals. The smell of blood began. The Italians were killing our men with razor blades. Our men were getting rid of Italians with knife blows.
>
> (Myrivilis 2017: 29, my translation: the excerpt is from the 1924 edition of the text)

The narrator seemingly adopts his own colonial outlook towards the 'Makedonski Orthodox', the Slavic Macedonians who hosted him while he was wounded. Their lack of a sense of national belonging puzzles the narrator, as it did the authorities (Horne 2018: 327). Although this lack of national sentiment renders them victims of competing nationalisms, for the narrator they are an 'exotic and premodern population' (Horne 2018: 327), unsoiled by the nationalism that led to the war. He compares himself to Robinson Crusoe who discovers a new world of noble values among these 'uncivilised' people. Myrivilis adopts the discourse of colonial discovery only to subvert the sense of superiority on which it is based (Kehagioglou 1993: 66). Thus, he reverses the hierarchies of civilised and uncivilised.

The narrator also describes his ideological evolution: from ardent patriotism to doubt about the purpose of war, and finally to the rejection of all the institutions that lead to the absurd situation of a soldier obliged to kill people without hating them, in the knowledge that they are also trapped in a similar *impasse*. This shift is due to his experience of the Macedonian Front. As the narrator repeatedly notes, it is very different from the enthusiasm of the Balkan wars, which implemented patriotic rhetoric. The difference lies in the trench warfare, which left the soldier idle for long periods of time, allowing him to think. Moreover, war technology rendered him cannon fodder, regardless of his effort.

Myrivilis also presents the misery of trench life and the tragicomic situations played out under the constant threat of death (culminating with the comparison of the great attack with a *bal-masqué*). These are in constant contrast to the nostalgia of peaceful life and the beauty of nature. The carnivalesque element of corporeality, the grotesque details of death and frustrated eroticism subvert the army rhetoric, patriotism, religion and international

law. The stories of the soldiers personalise the horrific experience of the people trapped in the war.

World War I and, for Greece, the Macedonian Front was an experience that introduced the combatants to modernity, to the absence of constant values, to doubt and denial. Testimony as a voice from below, which challenges hierarchies and literary conventions, is related to modernity and the foregrounding of individuality and subjectivity. The horror of war and the revolt of conscience are presented differently by each writer, depending on his political views. Myrivilis does not negate every aspect of the war, as is the case with Laskaridis. The tragic predicament of Laskaridis, his angry realism and his suicide embody the trauma of war and constitute him a soldier-writer *par excellence*. On the other hand, the realism of *Life in the Tomb*, the satire of the army and the church, the expressionistic presentation of the soldiers' sexuality, the subversion of the discourses of patriotism and heroism triggered the reactions of conservative circles and led to the banning of the book during the Metaxas dictatorship and the German occupation (1936–44). The Greek 'war book', especially in its 1924 edition, functioned as a challenge to the social and literary establishment, but at the same time the literary value of the text was recognised. The soldier-writer Myrivilis attempted to present the collective identities shaped by the war and to universalise the experience of the Macedonian front. The connection of the fictional and the factual created the sense of authenticity which ensured the text's successful reception for decades.

Notes

1 Mattheou (1985). *Life in the Tomb* was rewritten and expanded by Myrivilis in subsequent editions in book form and the polemical tone of the first edition was toned down. The seventh standard edition of the text is translated in English in Myrivilis (2004). On the revisions of the novel, see Boudouris (1983). The 1924 and 1930 editions of the text are available in Myrivilis (2017).

2 ΣΕΚΕ, Σοσιαλιστικό Εργατικό Κόμμα Ελλάδος [Socialist Labour Party of Greece]. Sarantakos (2011a: 17–9, 2011b: 105–8, 111–6).

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24 Painting visions of war and peace

Stanley Spencer, Henry Lamb and the Salonika campaign

Paul Gough

Introduction

In the spring of 1917, two English artists serving with the British expeditionary force in Macedonia met for the first time since their long service had begun. Friends from before the conflict, Stanley Spencer and Henry Lamb survived the war and went on to paint some of the seminal depictions of this largely forgotten front (Figure 24.1).

Their meeting at Kil-Kut (now known as Kilkis) was a significant occasion. For Spencer, then a stretcher-bearer in the Royal Army Medical Corps (RAMC), it was a momentous, quite moving reunion 'like coming across a cool running stream after a hot day's march' (Stanley Spencer to his sister Florence, 2 September 1917, Tate Gallery Archive, henceforth TGA, 733.1.756). He and Lamb, a Captain in the 30th Field Ambulance, reflected upon their service thus far. Spencer wrote home of a 'joyful exchange … under a big tree among the black and white sheep and the two big shaggy goats' within sight of a 'Mohammedan church' and its tall minaret (Spencer to Lamb, 20 July 1917, TGA 945.37).

In many ways they were an oddly matched couple. Lamb had trained in medicine at Guy's Hospital, London, and Manchester Medical School, but felt ill-suited to the profession and took up painting in Paris and London. When the war broke out, he read for the lowest medical qualification to gain a temporary commission in the Royal Army Medical Corps (RAMC). In August 1916 he was commissioned as a subaltern in the special reserve and posted with the Northumbrian Field Ambulance to Macedonia. In late 1917 he was transferred to the 30th Field Ambulance, then attached to the 5th Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, and posted to Palestine where he won the Military Cross for conspicuous gallantry for removing wounded under heavy shellfire. Serving in France in 1918 he was gassed and sent home as an invalid. He was then aged 36 (Clements 1985).

Stanley Spencer had studied at the Slade School of Art in London, gaining a reputation as a brilliant draughtsman of religious narrative paintings. In 1915, he volunteered for Home Service in the RAMC and spent ten gruelling months as a medical orderly in the Beaufort Military Hospital near Bristol. Volunteering for overseas service in May 1916 he sailed for Macedonia

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Figure 24.1 Private Stanley Spencer, Sergeant Percy Spencer (seated) and Lieutenant Sydney Spencer, c. 1918 and Percy and Sydney c. 1915, photograph by William Bailey.
Source: Stanley Spencer Gallery archive.

and served with a number of field ambulance units. After 18 months as an orderly behind the front lines, he heeded a call for infantry volunteers and joined The Royal Berkshires, seeing action during the offensives on the Doiran Front in mid- and late 1918. On four occasions he was hospitalised from malaria. In the closing months of the campaign the Ministry of Information had tried to release Spencer from his front-line duties to become an official war artist but the orders were apparently lost during the fighting that precipitated the end of the war. At the Armistice, Spencer was 27 years old.[1]

Working as official war artists

Spencer had been abject at not being released from the infantry in late 1918, leaving a poignant reflection of that troubled period:

> As the war drew to an end it became agonising to me wondering if I should be snatched away. Apart from greed for life I felt I had got a lot

> up my sleeve that I wanted to produce before I died, & every day I was being detailed off for worse & worse dangers. As an infantry man what would have been the use of this insignificant fragment of gun fodder that I was if I had said to the sergeants 'I have a picture at home & I just want to finish it before going into this attack'. In any case I was in the Vardar Valley preparing for a big offensive while my picture as I hoped was where I left it at home in Cookham…
>
> (Spencer, Numbered writings (c. 1936) TGA 733.2.44)

It was not until Spencer was back in England, safely in the bosom of his family, that he took on the painting commission as part of the British War Memorial Scheme. For the sum of £200, he was required to produce a single canvas to be located in a grand Hall of Remembrance intended for central London.[2]

Ignoring the committee's suggested title of 'A Religious Service at the Front', Spencer took as his subject a deep memory of an Advanced Dressing Station immediately behind the front lines on the Doiran-Vardar Sector in 1916. It had been located to cope with the expected casualties from an attack on Machine Gun Hill. Spencer, then serving with the 68th Field Ambulance near Corsica (today's village of Chaushitsa),[3] recalled the scene to his future wife Hilda:

> I was standing a little away from the old Greek church, which was used as a dressing station and operating theatre, and coming there were rows of *travoys* with wounded and limbers crammed full of wounded men. One would have thought that the scene was a sordid one, a terrible scene … but I felt there was a grandeur … all those wounded men were calm and at peace with everything so that pain seemed a small thing with them. I felt there was a spiritual ascendancy over everything.
>
> (Carline 1978: 112)

Spencer's orders were to accompany stretcher-bearers into the Sedemli Ravine, one of many riverbeds cut into the hills north of Kalinova. There, they would meet the regimental stretcher-bearers bringing casualties from the front-line, a routine accompanied by a curious 'clanging sound, as if bars of steel [were] coming together' (Spencer, Notebook 1945–47; TGA 733.3.86). He had to transfer these casualties from the stretchers to the mule-drawn 'travoys'. These were a sort of rough mountain sledge comprising two wooden shafts steel-tipped at one end, onto which precarious frame was strapped the canvas stretcher which was then dragged along the final stretch of its tortuous journey by a mule led by an Army Service Corps driver, hence the 'clanging sound' of grinding steel as the primitive contraption bumped noisily along the pitted tracks.[4]

Spencer had to reconstruct the scene at the dressing station from memory. All his sketches and personal property had been left behind in a military

bathhouse, while the regiment prepared for the final offensive of the campaign. Despite the best efforts none of the work was ever recovered. He was forced to concede that 'I suppose some Macedonian peasant now has my drawings'.[5]

As he started painting in 1919, Spencer wrote that he did not regard it as a war painting at all. Instead, he described it as an image of peace and hope, sentiments that were being swamped by the rhetoric of victory, loss and mourning that pervaded the post-war years. Here, the wounded have been returned to a place of peace, which he understood as a 'stillness of the spirit', not merely as a release from conflict. Surrounded by this 'communion of peace' Spencer intended to drown out the suffering and pain that hung around the aid post:

> It was possible even in the War to establish a peaceful atmosphere and of hope, and some sort of constructive life was sustained in this way. I was impressed with the calm way the wounded men spoke to each other – about some cabbages they had been trying to grow for instance… A homely atmosphere was being preserved in spite of what was happening… [*Travoys* was] not a scene of horror but a scene of redemption from it and I was right in making it a happy picture, as the early painters were right in making the Crucifixion a happy painting.
>
> (Spencer, TGA 733.3.1)

Spencer had long expressed a wish to paint the operating theatre at the hospital in Bristol. He had described and drawn the way the surgeon's implements radiated from the prostrate patient at the pictorial heart of the composition (Spencer to Desmond Chute, Summer 1916). Experimenting with this design for the commissioned painting, he made studies of travoys in procession along the Sedemli Ravine and others of the wounded being carried by mules. Yet, despite their gracefulness as sketches, they are rather modest when compared with the boldness of the final composition, *Travoys Arriving with Wounded at a Dressing-Station at Smol, Macedonia, September 1916* (Spencer, 1919, oil on canvas, 182.8 x 218.4 cm, IWM ART 2268; see Figure 24.2, p. 262).

Seen from a high vantage point, a fan-shape of stretchers radiates from a bare operating theatre, its harsh light casting shadows into a yard full of mules, drivers and orderlies. Under voluminous, dull-coloured blankets the casualties form misshapen bundles. All the visual detail, the hustle and bustle of figures, forms and animals is set in stark contrast to the concentrated silence within the chapel-like operating room. 'This picture is not', he wrote to the war museum, 'in any material or practical sense a truthful representation of the scene it is supposed to depict'. It was, as so often, multi-layered, spiritually ambitious beyond the sum of its many parts, a scene not of horror but of redemption:

> [it] is intended to convey a sense of peace in the middle of the confusion. The figures on the stretchers treated with the same veneration and awe

Figure 24.2 Stanley Spencer, *Travoys arriving with Wounded at a Dressing-Station at Smol, Macedonia, September 1919,* oil on canvas.
Source: Imperial War Museum.

> as so many crucified Jesus Christs and not as conveying suffering but as conveying a happy atmosphere of peace. Also like Christs on Crosses they belong to another world from those tending them.
>
> (Spencer, TGA 733.3)

The wounded soldiers in *Travoys* are caught in an indeterminate zone between life and death, balanced in a state of transubstantiation that would be explored more fully in Spencer's grand scheme for the Oratory of all Souls at Burghclere. They belonged to 'a different world than those tending them, in it but not of it' (Spencer, TGA 733.3.1).

Irish Troops in the Judean Hills

Henry Lamb had also been commissioned by the War Memorial Committee. He was required to paint a similarly sized canvas for the Hall of Remembrance, a grand idea that was to flounder through lack of money and depleted post-war enthusiasm. Nevertheless, Lamb's painting was one of the

more striking of those that were completed and one of few official paintings of the Palestine campaign (Lamb, 1919, oil on canvas, 183.4 x 219.7 cm, IWM ART 2746).

The sense of calm evoked in Spencer's *Travoys* was wholly missing from Lamb's painting. Based on front-line experiences in Palestine, *Irish Troops in the Judean Hills surprised by a Turkish Bombardment* was painted on the top floor of his studio overlooking Hampstead Heath. Wanting to create a faithful rendition of the Inniskillings under fire, Lamb procured a set of equipment and three rather unkempt ex-soldiers from a nearby Salvation Army hostel. They sat for him during the summer of 1919, each 'in turn leaned, crouched, and posed as though hurtling for cover among the paraphernalia of water bottles, entrenching tools and mess tins that littered the studio floor' (Bardgett 1990: 54). The result was an impressive evocation of violent warfare: a panoramic view of 11 figures struggling to reach the shelter of a grey stone terrace. For a painter who had done little serious painting for five years, it was a significant achievement, executed at pace to meet the committee's deadline.

Although Lamb's painting would do much to establish his reputation, Spencer was less sure about his official offering to the government scheme. On one occasion he sided with Henry Tonks, his former professor at the Slade, that the painting 'has all my worst faults & some worse than that. But there are many things in it which I like as much as anything I have done' (TGA 8116.87).

Advance Dressing Station on the Struma, 1916

In the years after the Armistice, while Spencer sought a funded project that would resurrect his feelings about the war, Lamb had continued to paint from his experiences in Macedonia. Drawing on his art school training he developed ideas he first tested in the *Irish Troops in the Judean Hills* canvas. In 1920 he exhibited a number of drawings and watercolours at Manchester City Art Gallery; one of these prompted the director to commission a major painting as the beginning of a war art collection for the city. The outcome was a significant canvas entitled *Advance Dressing Station on the Struma, 1916* (Lamb, 1921, oil on canvas, 183.6 x 212.3 cm, MCAG 1921.4; see Figure 24.3, p. 264).

It depicts a makeshift dressing station in a forest clearing; a group of RAMC men stand around two stretchers, a figure in the foreground leans over one of the stretchers tending to an injured man. In design, colour and mood the image is radically different from Lamb's painting of Palestine: the landscape is fecund, the figures are statuesque, almost monumental, the viewpoint is seen from below. With its pervading mood combining pathos, intimacy and epic power, Lamb's aim was to achieve a balance between factual verisimilitude and a latent symbolism. Although placed rather prosaically in a natural setting, the painting has strong religious overtones that

Figure 24.3 Henry Lamb, *Advance Dressing Station on the Struma, 1916,* oil on canvas.
Source: Manchester Art Gallery, UK/ Bridgeman Images/ The Estate of Henry Lamb.

lend an emotional weight to the image of succour and care that would have chimed with Spencer's spiritual views.

The central figure sets the palliative tone of the image: the bearer attends the wounded man with a cup of water, his hand gently cradles the man's head, providing physical and symbolic support that is redolent of the *Pietà.* Indeed, the stretcher could be regarded as a surrogate altar, reinforced by the low viewpoint, the tonal ledge of the shallow trench, and the symmetrical disposition of the standing figures. Thus, Lamb transforms a typically banal scene of waiting, refreshing and tending into 'an effigy of masculine care and the intimate brotherhood of shared suffering'. Taken as a pair, Lamb's canvases made in the aftermath of a long war mark a personal statement that symbolises the pain and succour of the entire conflict.[6] Spencer was also much taken with these issues and as peacetime replaced conflict he sought a funded scheme that would allow him to revisit his visions of war and recovery.

The origins of the chapel at Burghclere

Having fulfilled their commissions for the memorial scheme, both Lamb and Spencer resumed their business as painters. Spencer, younger, much less worldly – but ambitious – looked to the older man for guidance and support. He wrote of his affinity with Lamb, regarding him as his 'haven, rescuer and father confessor' (Clements 1985: 239) and readily took advantage of his generosity. In 1923, having already settled in Lamb's painting studio in Hampstead, he travelled to Poole, a small town in Dorset, to stay with Lamb in his house. This extended stay was to prove a turning point in Spencer's progress as a painter. Over many weeks during the early summer, he began pouring out ideas for a pictorial scheme based on his war experiences. Across a large circular table, he drew sheet after sheet of drawings 'as unhesitatingly as though he were writing a letter' (Spencer 1991: 144) churning out 'acres of Salonica and Bristol war compositions'.[7] In a short time, he had arrived at a near-finished design for a decorated building, complete with architectural features, lighting effects, and painted murals.

It was an extraordinary and singular achievement. Lamb must have watched in astonishment as Spencer effortlessly re-envisioned his time as an orderly, soldier and patient. His recollection of detail and local incident, and the compelling narrative embroidered throughout the scheme enraptured the many friends and patrons who visited the two painters. Indeed the idea so impressed two visitors, John Louis and Mary Behrend, who had supported both painters in recent times, that they commissioned Spencer over the following five years to build and decorate a memorial chapel in their village of Burghclere, Hampshire. It was a remarkable act of patronage, comparable to the grand commissions of the Renaissance, and at times as vexed and convoluted a process as any similar project (see Amanda Bradley's chapter on the Behrends in Gough 2017: 37–63). Despite the Behrends' unerring belief in the chapel, and their unstinting generosity, it was Spencer's energy, enthusiasm and untrammelled sense of knowing exactly what he wanted that really sustained the project during the design period (1924–25), the building period (1926–27) and the solitary periods aloft ladder and scaffolding while he meticulously and unfalteringly painted the walls of the chapel. Consecrated in March 1930, it was finally completed in 1932 (Gough 2006; see Figure 24.4, p. 266).

The painted walls: 'Odyssey of my war experiences'

> These pictures were a sort of odyssey of my war experiences, which I have been wanting to do for a long time. They don't look like war pictures, they rather look like heaven; a place I am becoming very familiar with. There are to be two pictures about 28 feet long and 10 feet high, then there is one about 14 feet square and 8 pictures with arched tops,

Figure 24.4 The Sandham Memorial Chapel, Burghclere, Hampshire. Architect Lionel G. Pearson.
Source: courtesy of Paul Gough.

> each of these will be about 7 feet high. Then there are 8 'predella' pictures below the arched pictures and 8 little pictures of incidents happening outside the door of a tent; these last to go either side of steps leading to the altar. … There's glory for you.
>
> (Spencer, TGA 825.14)

To open the doors of the modest red-brick chapel in the garden at Burghclere is to be almost overwhelmed with a floor-to-ceiling panorama of busy figures, lazing mules and a wall of painted white crosses piled high in a landscape that fuses Mediterranean light with a softer southern English pastoral. Despite the outward clamour of the composition, the plan of the paintings is in fact simple and symmetrical: on each of the side walls a lower *predella* of four rectangular canvases describes the 'hellish underworld' of the Beaufort Military Hospital; above them larger arched 'lunette' canvases depict Spencer's time in Macedonia, although two of the eight also describe typical events in the hospital – a convoy of wounded soldiers at the gates, and another of a busy bathroom in the wing where

Figure 24.5 Stanley Spencer, *Riverbed at Todorova*, Sandham Memorial Chapel, South Wall.
Source: National Trust photographic library/ John Hammond/ Bridgeman Images.

Spencer worked a gruelling 14 hour day. Above the lunettes, high in the darker recesses on either side of the oblong interior are matching friezes. One depicts troops at camp in Karasuli (known now as Polykastro) and the other a sunlit scene of men washing and resting on the River Vardar, near Todorova (see Figure 24.5, p. 267).[8] The endwall of the interior is a vast composition depicting soldiers in a state of harmonious grace; resting and greeting each other, gathering their white crosses and handing them over to a Christ figure high on a hillside that blends soft English downland with more rugged Greek terrain.

The Quattrocento realised in Macedonia

When Spencer had first volunteered for military service in 1914, he joked to Henry Lamb that he would do so one condition, that he must 'have Giotto, The Basilica of Assisi … & Fra Angelico in one pocket & Masaccio, Masolino & Giorgione in the other' (Spencer to Lamb, 12 August 1914, TGA 945.16). As a student at the Slade, Spencer regarded the painters of the early Italian renaissance as a constant inspiration, his creative touchstone. While serving at the Beaufort Hospital he had relieved the tedium by poring over the black and white reproductions of their paintings in the sixpenny pocket editions published by Gowan and Gray. Trying to cut out the clamour of the wards, he would become absorbed in the quiet, unassuming realism of Lorenzetti, Mantegna, Masaccio, and Uccello, but it was Giotto's work, with its 'almost nonchalant approach to the miraculous' (MacCarthy 1997: 13) that perhaps made the deepest impression on him and fortified him during the war.

Landing on the Salonika Front in 1916 made a very different, but equally powerful impression. Spencer was first posted not to a field hospital but to the Doiran Sector as part of a detachment headed for the 68th Field Ambulance. A 20-mile train journey took him to the railhead at Karasuli. It was to be a turning point in his relationship to the war and a seminal moment in his development as an artist. What he saw from the train carriage was an entirely new landscape, one he had never before witnessed with his own eyes, but which seemed strangely familiar. The whitewashed buildings, solitary peasants, goats and donkeys, cypresses and deep ravines were the very same features that he had studied so often in the art of the Quattrocento, in those Italian paintings that so moved him in the National Gallery in London, and in the tiny reproductions of his cherished pocket books. It was as if the painted visions of his youth had become fact: his imagined Biblical landscapes had found their proper Renaissance setting. The impact was profound.

> I sat on the wooden seats [of the troop train from Lembet [present day Staroupoli]] & was entranced by the landscapes from the window. Low plains with trees & looking through trees to strange further plains, or fields, & here & there a figure in dirty white. It was not landscape; it was a spiritual world. I would go there again if I could….
>
> (Spencer, Notebook 1945–47, TGA 733.3.86)

A decade later Spencer would re-imagine this spiritual world on the painted walls of the Oratory in Burghclere. However, years of war stood between him and that extraordinary achievement. During those long and dangerous months, he took succour from the richness of the historic geography around him. His most cherished tract of Macedonia was the gentle valley that skirted a lake nearer the front-line. Travelling with a small detachment of RAMC men in the company of a line of ration-carrying oxen, he imagined this track as being much like the road that ran along the foot of Cockmarsh Hill back home in Cookham. This habit of fusing one place of profound meaning with another became Spencer's way of adjusting to the disruptions of war, the jolts and disjunctions that unnerved him. It brought about extended moments of reverie, which were essential to his survival as a young man and as an artist:

> Along this track which wandered along the foot of some lines of hills between Lake Ardzan, from Karasuli to Kalinova, most of what was vital to me in Macedonia was felt. Whatever the number of kilo[metre]s it is, 10 or 20, each one is a part of my soul. When I think of the places along it and the different parts of this continuous hillside, for me to describe them is to describe something of myself.
>
> (Spencer, Notebook 1945–47, TGA 733.3.86)

The painted walls of Sandham Memorial Chapel

Spencer was an inveterate writer. It is reckoned he recorded over two million words in his letters, reminiscences, diaries and other writings. During his years in Macedonia Spencer accumulated and recorded his experiences as a stretcher-bearer, gravedigger, mule-attendant, orderly, and then an infantryman. Much of it he found visually stimulating. A constant flow of letters from the front-line contained ideas for a series of paintings that he wanted to create. He wanted urgently to reconcile his experience of war through the language of art; he had seen death at close-hand, he had tended the wounded, he had buried many soldiers. His robust faith had been severely shaken at times. On the walls of the chapel, he wanted figuratively to bring the dead back to life.

He was not alone; in 1927 the Australian painter Will Longstaff created a memorable canvas of exhumed troops marching on the Menin Gate. In Germany artists such as Otto Dix were revisiting their Flanders nightmares, creating dreadful images of soldiers rotting in the dystopia of the Western Front. Spencer did not wish to depict horror and suffering; his paintings may ostensibly be about war, but death is the 'absent referent' lingering in the wings, invisible, not even relegated to a walk-on part (Gough 2010: 263–81).

One of the challenges that Spencer faced when composing his murals was to create a unifying scheme across the Chapel. This is achieved partly through the architecture and the symmetry of the design, but also through the scale of the figures, the clever use of pictorial pattern, and the flatness of the treatment. On the side walls there are no deep perspectives into the distance, few visual holes 'punched' into the wall. Pattern succeeds where perspective prevails on the end wall. Colour is locally flavoured and yet full of vitality. Reproductions do a disservice to its richness, they reduce it to sepia, just as our deepest memories of the past are often seen in black and white. In the chapel, Spencer's accurate rendition of the Macedonian shrubs, flowers and foliage adds vitality and textural variety. Although he made relatively few sketches in Macedonia and lost all his notes and drawings, he was gathering information all the time. Remarkably he had almost total visual recall. We can only marvel at his rendering of the human details – the dozens of youthful soldiers, their variety of hairstyles, their averted gaze, their rapturous self-absorption – as well at the myriad of inanimate objects, from the guy ropes trailing off a semi-erected canvas tent to the leather webbing laid out in the painting 'Stand-to'. Patiently, over months and then years, Spencer worked his way methodically across the chapel, working in all conditions, eschewing artificial lighting, he conjured up a thousand tactile memories to resurrect the war. 'I felt when I looked at them', wrote one shrewd critic, 'that every one of the thousand memories recorded had been driven into the artist's consciousness like a sharp-pointed nail' (Wilenski 1931: 280–5).

Despite its steady insistence on detail and pictorial verisimilitude, the chapel offers us a sensorial range that is not merely visual. The experience of war awoke something in Spencer he least expected. He wrote of Gallipoli men who shared that war had 'awakened a desire or instinct which makes you more spiritually living than you ever have been before' (Spencer to the Raverats, TGA 8116.61). Like many combatants, the front-line held Spencer in a state of dread fascination. The enemy – mostly Bulgarians – is only hinted at:

> Of course, it is very difficult to express all the many feelings I had about the Bulgars, a number of these wonderful feelings resulting from the fact that they were the enemy. First, the 'enemy' element gave me this feeling of remoteness from them – a feeling that they belonged to another planet. … Secondly, there was the fact that we went into 'no-man's-land' in the night, so that I never saw what that land looked like in the daylight. Everything had to be done in dead silence, and can you imagine the mystery when, on some pale Macedonian moonlight night, we were told to go into this unknown land, and we go and with all the feeling and wonder that one might experience in entering a jungle full of wild beasts.
>
> (Spencer, Numbered writings 1936, TGA 733.2.25)

On the walls of the chapel, Spencer hints at this unknown land not only by visualising it, but by suggesting it was *heard* rather than seen. In the two panels either side of the end wall soldiers are becoming aware of a sound, they angle their heads to listen to the rejoicing. Inside a painted tent the figures are themselves being re-born in a moment of transubstantiation. This sense of personal spiritual recovery is the deepest meaning of the chapel. Spencer saw re-birth, revival and the resurrection all around him. War had torn apart his settled world, it had dis-membered the past. Now, he seized the opportunity to re-member it. To bring the disjointed and disparate parts into one unified whole. There is little else like it in any painted recollection of any twentieth-century war.

So what are we to make of 'The Resurrection of the Soldiers' (see Figure 24.6, p. 271) that occupies the entire end wall? For nine months Spencer toiled away on his scaffold. His small, tweed-suited figure was lost high amongst the dozens of painted figures. Unflinching in its detail, celebratory in its love for the common man, and joyous in its celebration of earthly redemption, the wall describes the resurrection of a platoon of soldiers. They calmly emerge from the Macedonian earth, and with disarming grace and composure they return their white crosses to the workmanlike figure of Christ who can be spotted high on the wall wandering between lazing mules and coils of wire. Spencer's idea of resurrection was not one of judgment, nor of the revival of the dead, or the re-appearance of Christ. Instead, it embraced the more holistic idea of the Resurrection of the body and the

Figure 24.6 Stanley Spencer, *The Resurrection of the Soldiers,* altar piece, Sandham Memorial Chapel, Burghclere.

Source: National Trust photographic library, AC Cooper/ Bridgeman Images/ © The Estate of Stanley Spencer.

mind. Spencer's social background and his concern for the 'common man' (and woman) meant that he was indifferent to social hierarchy and ignorant of wealth and position. The Oratory was not a resurrection solely of the dead, nor for that matter a resurrection merely of the soul, rather it was resurrections of his state of mind at different times. For Spencer, it was a time of 'release & change' whereby even the Macedonian mules & the tortoises came in for some sort of redemption, or re-finding of themselves from their experiences. Even the soldiers under mosquito nets seem to be caught in an act of spiritual change, altering from one state to another, and everywhere soldiers emerge from the earth to return their now-redundant crosses to the Christ-figure, just as they had, at the end of hostilities, returned their blankets and kit to the quartermaster. 'In the resurrection', said Spencer, 'they have even finished with that last piece of worldly impedimenta' (to Richard Carline, in Carline 1978: 190–1).

In my view, and that of many others, the Sandham Memorial Chapel is one of the greatest places of public memory, but the chapel also tells Spencer's *personal* story as an orderly, soldier and a patient in terms that might be understood as also a parable of innocence, fall and redemption.

Notes

1 An extensive bibliography on Spencer is in Gough (2006).
2 The Hall of Remembrance project ended in failure for many reasons, not least a lack of public will to raise funds for such a vast building project. A similar scheme for Ottawa, Canada also floundered.
3 Chaushitsa is in North Macedonia, not far from Bitola. 'Corsica' was probably a joke name invented by British soldiers on the basis of one of the written forms of the (Slav) village name; cf. the name 'Wipers' for the Belgian town Ypres.
4 In addition to the 'travoy' was the cacolet, a chair slung either side of a mule.
5 Recorded in Florence Image, *Mosaic*, unpublished Spencer family record, Berkshire County Records Office, Reading.
6 Notes from the exhibition, Carden-Coyne 2016.
7 Henry Lamb to Richard Carline, 10 June 1923. The table is depicted in Lamb's 1926 oil painting *The Tea Party* (private collection) which shows Lamb and others listening to an animated Spencer on the far side.
8 The names of most of the places Spencer knew have changed: Salonika is now Thessaloniki; the River Vardar is now the Axios; Karasuli is Polykastro; Sidemli as it was known to British forces, was actually Chidemli, and is now Metamorfosi; Smol: Mikro Dasos; 'Corsica': Chaushitsa; 'Basili': Bajirli and Lembet is present day Stavroupoli.

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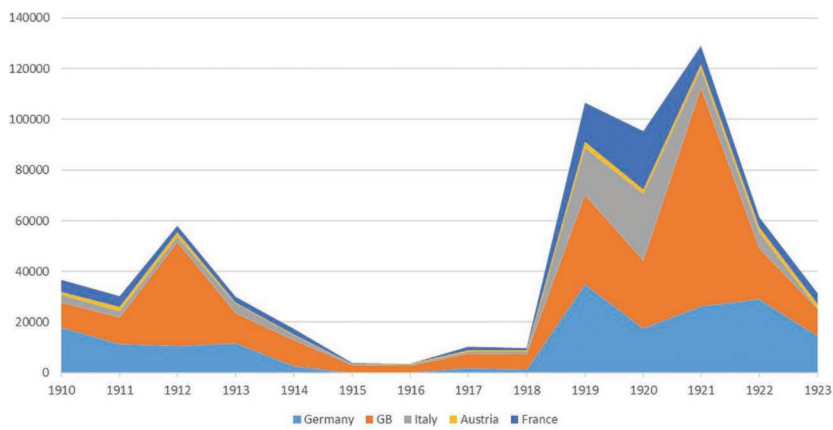
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